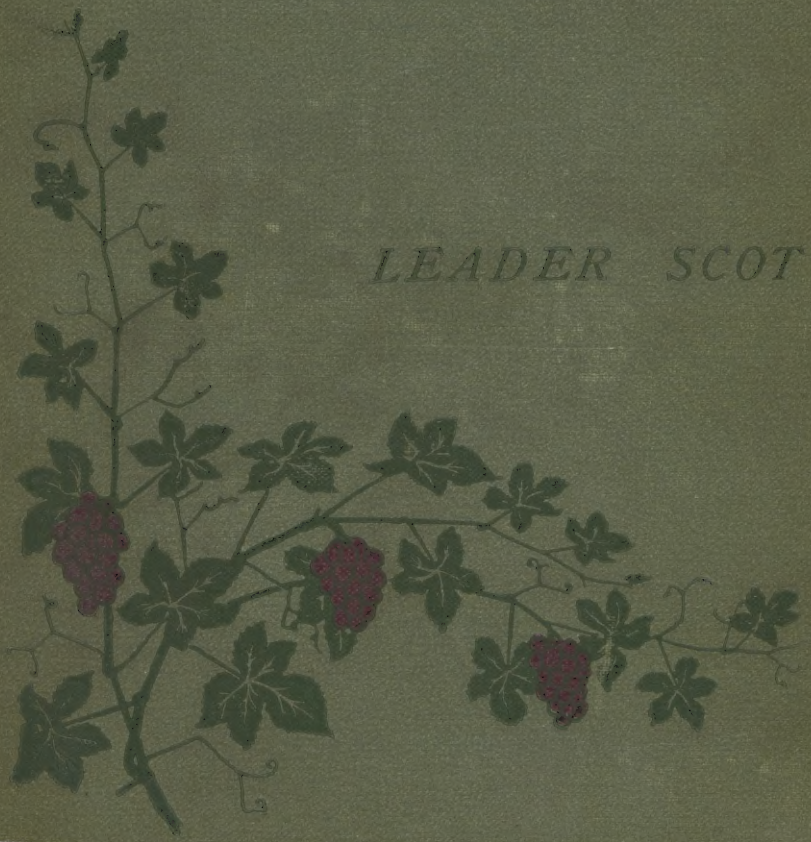
Tuscan Studies and Sketches

LEADER SCOTT



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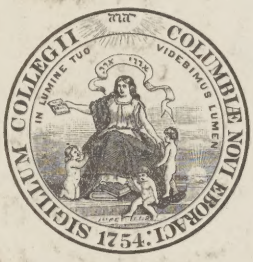

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SAN MINIATO.

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TUSCAN STUDIES

AND

SKETCHES

BY

LEADER SCOTT

Author of

"A NOOK IN THE APENNINES," "HESSER AGNOLO'S HOUSEHOLD,"
"THE RENAISSANCE OF ART IN ITALY"

ILLUSTRATED

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MDCCCLXXXVIII

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PREFACE.

THERE is a certain ancient library in Florence, called the "Magliabecchiana," which is a delightful haunt for a book-worm. Here one can burrow among the black-letter tomes of the old chronicler, and there is no more amusing reading than the gossip of the old Florentine writer. Here one can find all that past times have known on any Florentine subject, and hunt out the history of every old family and massive palace. On the floor above, the archives are preserved, and here the student may read the letters and documents of Florentine citizens, governors, artists, and authors for

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centuries back, and repeople the palaces as they were in ages gone by.

It is among the worm-eaten old tomes of the Magliabecchiana library, and the MS. folios of the archives, that I have burrowed out, from the writing of many a dead hand, the story of some of our Florentine treasures.

The sketches are from nature, and are scenes we have come across in rambling here and there in this delightful land—whose past is a glorious record, whose present is a beauty and a hope.

Much of the matter is new to print; but I must beg to thank very heartily Messrs. Cassell and Co., for their kind permission to make use of Chapters I. and V. in Part I., which have appeared in "The Magazine of Art;" also the Editor of "The Ladies' Treasury," who allows the reprint of Chapters III., V., and VIII. in the Second Part, and the Editor of "The Art Journal" for Chapter VII., Part I.

LEADER SCOTT.

FLORENCE, 1887.

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PART I.

TUSCAN STUDIES.

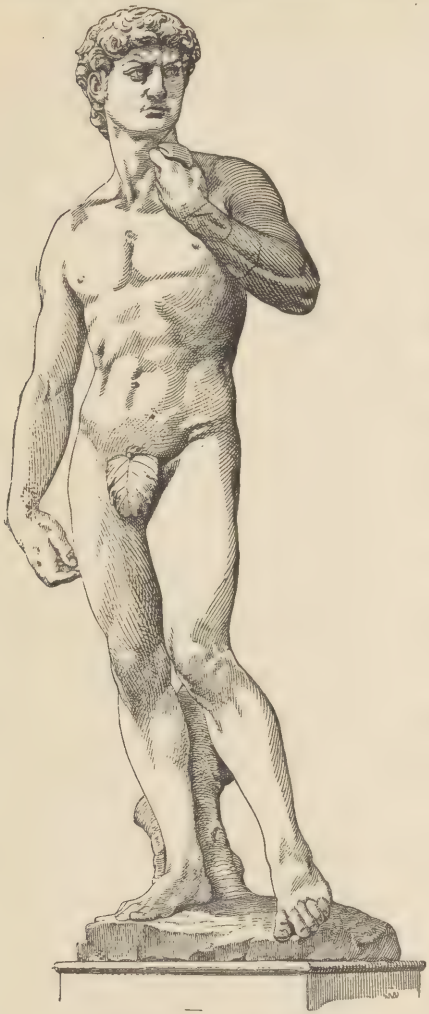
CHAPTER I.

The Giants at the Gates.

I.—DAVID.

SHRINED in the very heart of Florence is the ancient Palace of the Signory, with its Moorish cortile, its machicolated battlements, and airy bell-tower rising flower-like on its slender column. For many centuries these walls have sheltered the rulers of the city. During the Republic, Ghibelline and Guelph alternately held sway here. Mediæval Gonfalonieri, with their train of Priors and Signory, gave way to the more despotic Ducal rule. In more modern days the Italian Parliament was held there, and now it is merely a provincial municipality. And steadfast to their post, whatever

may be the ruling power, the three colossi that guard the gates have stood firm and unchanging as rocks in a surging sea. Thus immutable through several stirring centuries, these giants, the David,[1] the Hercules, and the Neptune, have grown into the inmost heart of Florence, and become part of her story, and the piazza is like a house where death has left a vacant place, since the removal of the David from its post.



MICHAEL ANGELO'S DAVID.

Taken as mere statues, these colossi are

[1] The David, at least, has seen many changes; the other two were placed during the Ducal government.

only works which occupied a few years in the sculptors' lives, and a few pages in their memoirs, amongst many other works perhaps more important; but taken in a group, as signs of the times which produced them, they are a very significant trio. Scarcely fifty years elapsed between the commencement of the first and the completion of the last; but what a half-century of changes and revolutions it was! When the David came into being, Florence was a town of flourishing burghers, whose complaisance had recently been shaken into religious fervour or obstinate disbelief by the fermentation of Savonarola's enthusiasm and his opponents' rage. What was more appropriate than that Michael Angelo, being called on for a great national work, should emblematize his city as a youth triumphing over a giant foe by the aid of Divine power?

Thirty years later, when the Hercules was placed as a pendant to the David, the Medici were again in supreme power. A Medici Pope (Leo X.) gave the order to Bandinelli, and he could think of no more appropriate emblem of his city than Hercules, the man-hero triumphing in his own power—a tribute to the irresistible sway of the proud dukes. Later still,

when the Medici power and magnificence had reached their height, Florence came out from the hands of Ammanati emblematized, not only by human strength, but by that of a god commanding even the elements.

Apart from these historical significations, it is also interesting to read in the two first statues the mind and character of the sculptors. Michael Angelo, greatest of artists, but still humble before the mighty grandeur of art itself—often abandoning his works unfinished because he could not give them the divinity his soul had conceived—chose as a subject a youth inspired with the divine spirit, and trusting not at all in his own power. Bandinelli, on the contrary, arrogant and self-asserting, chose the man-god Hercules, whose power was in himself, and did not come from an inspiration of divine art. The Neptune not being the independent choice of the sculptor, but taken merely as appropriate to a fountain, is not, like the others, emblematic of its maker.

I propose, therefore, to follow these three giants into life, step by step, from the very marble quarries. The story of David is, I am aware, an oft-told tale: but in that, as in the two less known works, the account given in the life of the artist is but a small

part of the story of the statue, which enters into the biography of others besides its maker.

In the Middle Ages, from the time when the building of the cathedral began, an institution existed in Florence, called the "Opera del Duomo," or, as it may be anglicized, "Company of Works of the Cathedral." This company consisted of all the famous architects, artists, and men of skill of the time; and in a large building on the Piazza del Duomo they had studios for the sculptors, carvers, and decorators engaged in the building of the church. They superintended the building, and were, besides, the great patrons of art in those days, most of the public works of art being the fruit of commissions given by them.

On April 16, 1463, we find the Opera giving a commission to a certain "Agostino di Antonio di Ducci," sculptor, to make a giant similar to one standing above the door of the Church of the Servi—"or better," as the original document says—and for this they proposed to give him 321 lire (the lira of that time was worth 84 centimes, or 8d.).[1]

The books of the "House of Works of the Duomo"

[1] Stanziamenti dell' Opera, 1463. Gaye, ii. 466.

contain also an entry on the 23rd of November, the same year, that "the giant made by Agostino di Ducci being finished in perfection, they paid him 265 lire, 13 denari, being the remainder of the sum due to him."

So pleased were they with this work, that in 1464, when a huge block of marble, of nine braccia long, had been excavated at Carrara, the Opera commissioned the same Agostino Ghucci, or Ducci, to make a figure "in the form of a giant, in the name and place of a prophet"—I give a literal translation of the old document—"to place on a sprone, or buttress, of the Duomo, as the Company of Works should choose, the which figure he had promised to make in four pieces—that is to say, one piece the head and throat, two pieces the arms, and all the rest one piece." [1] This quaint commission is dated August 18, 1464. There is a question whether the "Arte della Lana" or the "Opera" gave the order; but however it was, the figure was never finished. The very Fates forbade the birth of a giant whose head and arms were to be patched on; and instead of poor Agostino earning 300 florins by making a better statue than the former, his

[1] Gaye, ii. 467.

bare expenses of a hundred florins were paid to him, and he was excluded from being one of the workmen for the Duomo. The block he had nearly spoiled lay useless among the marbles in the great courtyard of the works, and nobody either made or marred it for nearly forty years. Vasari says Simone di Fiesole worked at it—indeed, he gives him the credit of spoiling it; but the documents we have mentioned prove without a doubt that Agostino was the culprit. It had once been offered to Donatello, but he, despising Agostino's inartistic chippings, refused the questionable honour.

In 1500 Andrea Contucci del Monte Sansovino, a sculptor who had studied with Michael Angelo in his boyish days in the Medici gardens, returned to Florence from Portugal, and seeing the great stone, begged to have it. He would have pieced it out, but this the Opera objected to. Then Pier Soderini, the Gonfaloniere, offered to buy it to give to Leonardo da Vinci; and while all this was going on, Michael Angelo came upon the scene. The manner of his coming is a doubtful question. Vasari says that his friends wrote to him in Rome to tell him that the marble was going begging,

and he who had long wished to obtain it came and made every effort to get the commission.[1]

Grimm tells the story another way. He writes that, on the request of Sansovino for the marble, the consuls of the Arte-Lana, not liking his scheme of piecing it out, wished to obtain Michael Angelo's opinion as to the possibility of his producing anything out of it himself.[2] He came, saw, and decided to conquer this stumbling-block. In the deformed giant he beheld the germs of the David which was afterwards to astonish the world. He had on hand a commission from Cardinal Piccolomini to execute fifteen small statues for a tomb in Siena Cathedral, but he gave up this profitable work on gaining the coveted order for the Florentine colossus. Here is the document, dated —"1501. 16 August." "The honourable (spectabiles) Company of the Wool Staplers (Artis Lanæ) being assembled, together with the Company of Works, in the audience chamber of said Opera, to deliberate on giving a work of sculpture which should reflect honour on the company, to a worthy master, herewith commission Michael Angelo Ludovico Buonarroti, Florentine

[1] Vasari's "Lives of the Painters," vol. v. p. 240.

[2] Grimm's "Life of Michael Angelo," vol. i. p. 202.

citizen, to make and perfect a man called a giant, blocked out of a piece of marble nine braccia high [17¼ feet] existing in the said Opera, before commenced by Master Agostino [here the surname is illegible from the damp], and badly commenced; in the space of two years, from the proximate kalends of September, with the salary of six gold florins monthly; the House of Works to furnish workmen, a suitable and commodious place, woodwork, and all other necessaries. The said statue finished, they will meet to consult if it merits a further price, and this is to be left to their consciences." [1]

I do not know how far an artist of the present day would like to trust to the consciences of his patrons as to the price to be paid for his work, but the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the age of true art patronage, and sculptors worked for glory and not for a means of livelihood. Michael Angelo made a small model in wax, of David with a sling in his hand, as an emblem of the government then reigning, that as David had conquered in the power of the Lord, and ruled His people justly, so the Signoria, having vanquished their tyrants, should continue to govern

[1] Gaye's "Carteggia Inedita," vol. ii. p. 434.

wisely. A studio was enclosed around the marble, with planks and masonry, and here, on Monday morning, September 13, 1501, he commenced to work in right earnest, although he had some days before given a few blows to the stone.[1]

Here, then, for five months the great master spent his days, hewing and hammering the mis-shapen block. With him sculpture meant really carving from the living rock, as its name implies, not the mere modelling in clay, which is misnamed sculpture in the present day. Michael Angelo had no set of mechanics to copy his model by rule, line, and a multitude of pegs, and then send it forth to the world as sculptured (*scolpito*) by his own hand. No! he worked in solitude, if that can be called solitude which is peopled by the spirits and thoughts of art and genius. He made no mechanical measurements and contrivances, but with his little wax model by his side and the giant form in his soul, he day by day transferred that form to the marble. That he worked with his whole heart and soul we know. He attacked the marble with such fury and impetus that it seemed he would break it to pieces; one blow knocked off bits three or four fingers

[1] "Archives and Deliberations of Opera, 1496 to 1507."

wide, but always true to the line; in a quarter of an hour he hewed off more pieces than the stoutest stone-cutter could do in an hour. While engaged on any great work, Michael Angelo lived a most moderate life, "taking only a frugal refreshment at the close of his day's work. He slept very little, frequently rising in the night and resuming his labours with the chisel because he could not rest. For these occasions he had made himself a cap of pasteboard, in the centre of which he placed his candle, which thus gave him light without encumbering his hands. The candles were made of goat's tallow." [1]

In this way the time passed till February 28, 1502, when, the work being half completed, Michael Angelo called together his patrons to judge of its merits, and they decreed to give him 400 florins in gold, the monthly salary, however, to be deducted.

After this the work went on more slowly; it was a time of great internal disturbance for Florence, the Medici again attempting to establish themselves, and Cæsar Borgia also scheming to become possessed of the city. However, by the beginning of the year 1504, the statue was almost completed, and an entry

[1] Vasari, vol. v. p. 339.

appears in the Archives of the Works of the Duomo, dated, "1504, January 25. To call a meeting of all the well-known artists, and architects, and men of note, to take their opinions on the subject of a good site for it."

And certainly the king among sculptors could have had no more worthy judges than the illustrious group of notabilities—many of their names as immortal as his own—who met in the audience chamber of the Works of the Duomo to do honour to Michael Angelo's "David."

They sat in the *atelier* with the youthful giant, hitherto shrouded from mortal gaze, exposed to view in their midst; and though many of them may have felt a natural envy in their hearts, none could find a word to say except in praise. There were Sansovino and Leonardo da Vinci, both of whom had tried to obtain the marble for themselves, and in the report of the meeting it is noticeable that the two spoke only very few words and were not warm in their admiration.

All the famous artists of the day grouped around. There was old Cosimo Roselli and his son Piero, Andrea della Robbia, Francesco Granacci,—Michael

Angelo's boyish friend and rival in the Medici Gardens,—Pietro Perugino, and Lorenzo di Credi, the great architects Giuliano and Antonio San Gallo, and many other men of standing in the city.

Michael Angelo had his own choice after all, and the David was placed at the gate, a giant guardian who has stood at his post steadfastly for three centuries and a half, to be deposed at last, when in 1873 the statue was removed to the Belle Arti.

A month or two now sufficed to finish the work, and on the 1st of April, 1504, Simone del Pollaiuolo was commissioned, in the presence of Michael Angelo, to conduct the marble statue to the palace before the 25th of the same month.

This arrangement does not seem to have been carried out, for on the 30th of April, 1504, is a very severe order from the Signoria to the "Worshipful Company of the Works of the Duomo, that Simone del Pollaiuolo, Antonio di San Gallo, Bartolomeo, carpenter, and Bernardo, architect, are deputed by the before mentioned 'magnificent' Signoria to conduct the giant which is in the House of Works to the Loggia of the Signoria by the end of May." [1] A few

[1] Gaye's "Carteggia," vol. ii. p. 463.

days later the narrow streets of old Florence were filled with a busy crowd escorting the colossus to his abiding-place.

On the 14th of May, the wall of the *atelier* having been broken down around the door to allow of its exit, the statue, which weighed 18,000 lbs., was drawn into the open air. Grimm—quoting Parenti's MS. "Storia Fiorentina" probably—says the scaffolding was devised by Cronaca. Vasari, who in this case happens to agree with the document we have quoted above, gives the brothers San Gallo the credit of it. The statue hung free by means of ropes in a huge framework of wood; the frame was drawn slowly forward on oiled beams by means of pulleys, the united strength of forty men being required to move it. The first day's journey only accomplished a small part of the way, and it was left at nightfall alone in the unlighted streets. The successful artist must have had some envious rivals, for during the hours of darkness stones were thrown at it. The second night a watch was set, but the rival's partisans were not to be balked of their demonstrations, and attacked the watch while trying to injure the statue. Eight of them were, however, apprehended and imprisoned.

On the 18th of May, 1504, at mid-day it reached the Piazza. The Judith of Donatello, which was thought to have a sinister effect on the fortunes of the city, was removed from its position on the Ringhiera of the palace, and the David took its vacant place. This, however, was not accomplished till the 8th of June

How well we can imagine the scene on the Piazza as the noble form rose erect in the sunlight and took its stand as one of the household gods of the Florentines! From the day of its completion, the city reckoned her deliverance from three great enemies—the two Borgias, and Piero di Medici, who was drowned in disputing the passage of the river at the battle of Garigliano. The Florentines also attributed to its beneficent influence the conquest of Pisa, which took place shortly after. As a work of art, the David is well worthy its position as a good genius. Vasari affirms that "it surpasses all others, ancient or modern," and that "he who has seen this, therefore, need not care to see any production besides, whether of our own time or those preceding it." When one reflects how the artist's ideal must have been cramped by working it down to a spoiled material, the freedom and power of the David are surprising. So closely

has he used the marble, that the marks of the chisel of Agostino still in a measure mar the head and the back of the shepherd-warrior. He stands in his full grace of large-limbed youth, his powerful limbs forming a curious contrast to the fresh boyish expression of his face. Yet this contrast is a great triumph of art in adhering to nature.

Grimm, after comparing Michael Angelo's style, formed by a study of nature rather than of ancient art, says (vol. ii. p. 129) that "in some unexpected manner he is even more true to nature than the more perfect Greek masters. The Greeks had formed an ideal scale for physical representation, according to which, certain periods of life were taken as the centre of fixed epochs, and were adhered to by the artists. There is in boys at three or four years old a time of shooting up when they grow thin and slender. I never have found this produced by Greek sculptors. Such periods of development and growth occur again after the vigorous boyish age; this also they have passed over. And it is precisely this gaunt, long-limbed period of youth that Michael Angelo has shown in the David. . . . But going through the works of ancient art we find none that, as in the David, combines such a strong,

almost thick head, with such a slim and even slender figure, and lastly with such large hands and feet. Nature permits such a combination of contradictions. This very union of awkwardness and agility distinguishes a certain age, and nothing could be more characteristic than Michael Angelo's David if he was, as the Bible describes him, at once a youth and a hero, a shepherd's boy, more dexterous than strong, like a horse which has not yet entirely lost the colt-like feeling in his limbs."

Michael Angelo's fidelity to nature in contrast to the more eclectic style of Greek masters may be explained by the fact that the Greeks aimed at the perfection of beauty, and therefore would not portray the human figure at the stage of imperfection or of incompleted beauty. They delighted in perfect infancy, perfect childhood, and perfect manhood, but ignored that transition stage at which childhood's grace has vanished and manly strength is yet incomplete. Michael Angelo had such faith in Nature's grandeur that he has ventured to represent her faithfully even at an immature point.

It was while the David statue was standing still enclosed in its scaffolding that the oft-told incident of

the Gonfaloniere Soderini's pseudo-criticism took place. Poor Piero Soderini! it is probable he is better known to posterity for this little bit of ignorant conceit than for all the good he did for his city during his long and difficult rule.

On the 11th of June another order was sent on behalf of the Government to the Opera, or House of Works, to make a base of marble for the statue, which was already placed at the door of the palace. While standing there in the first days of its public existence, it was covered with laudatory sonnets from the pens of all the artist's admirers and friends. Cellini says there were several hundreds of them. It was the fashion among the wits and poets of the age to pay their homage to genius in this manner.

The Gonfaloniere was so pleased at the glory reflected on the Signoria by such a masterpiece of art, that he ordered Michael Angelo to make a second David in bronze, to send to France as a present to the Marshal de Gies. The great artist soon after went to Rome, at the invitation of Pope Julius II,, who became his greatest patron in after years.

The David led a peaceful life for eight years; then came the fall of the Gonfaloniere Soderini and

the recall of the Medici, who were brought back by force of the Spanish troops under Cordova. Poor deposed Soderini rode away with his friends in the dark night of August 30, 1512, and on the 16th of September a surging crowd filled the piazza around the David. Giuliano de Medici marched into the great hall and demanded his rights and restoration. The great bell was sounded, friends and enemies filled the square, the Signoria stood in angry state on the Ringhiera by David's side; but their city's standard was in the hand of Giuliano de Medici, and the revolution ended by his assuming the government, the troops of foreign mercenaries which supported his cause proving too formidable for even the sturdy Florentine burghers.

But though the David stood unscathed during the dangers of the first revolution it witnessed, it was not so fortunate in the second, which took place in 1527. The Medici were once more expelled; a terrible fight raged before the Palazzo Vecchio, the party in possession defending it against the intruders. One of the besieged cast a heavy missile (a bench or form) down from the battlements on the heads of the party who were trying to force an entrance, but the unwieldy mass fell in-

stead on the uplifted arm of David and broke it in three pieces. The fragments lay unheeded on the ground for two turbulent days, no one heeding the fracture of a piece of still life, however beautiful, while so much human blood was being shed around. But two boys came to the rescue. Francesco Salviati from his windows, seeing the precious fragments trampled under the feet of the insurgents, ran to call his friend Georgio Vasari, then a boy of his own age (about fifteen or sixteen), and the two daring youths made their way into the piazza, rescued the broken bits from beneath the very feet of the soldiers, and carried them off to the house of Michel Agnolo de Rossi, a weaver of velvets, and father of the painter Salviati. For years the good genius of the city stood mutilated before the palace gate, but when at length Duke Cosimo came into power, he regained the fragments and had them attached by means of copper nails. Since that time the David has stood uninjured in the midst of wars and revolutions, till a few years ago (1873) it was removed to the Gallery of the Belle Arti, the fears which Antonio S. Gallo had expressed 360 years ago as to the danger of exposing so tender a marble to the air having again arisen in the minds of the modern

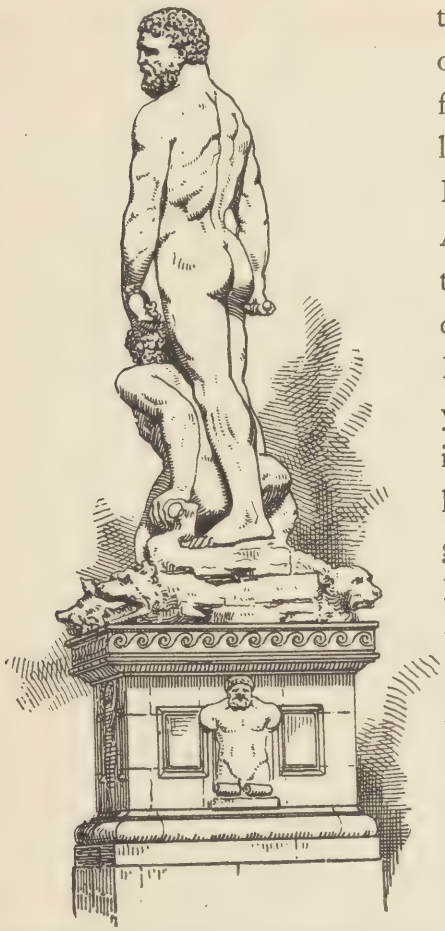
Florentines. The ceremony of removal took some days. A huge wooden car and a temporary tramway were constructed, the wall of the Belle Arti being opened to receive it, just as in the old days that of the studio had been broken to admit of its exit.

It has a handsome tribune built for its reception, and well sheltered from outer storm may yet last many centuries; but in the hearts of the Florentines the vacant place at the gates awakes a sigh, and the very piazza seems to have lost a little of its life. The Hercules stands alone as giant guardian of the ancient gate, and the symmetry of the entrance now seems lost.

II.—HERCULES.

The David had stood for four years a solitary giant guardian at the doors of the palace of the Signoria, and the good burghers of Florence had begun to reckon their family events by its advent, and to say such a thing happened "before the giant came," or "it was just a year after the giant was put up;" when Pier Soderini, the Gonfaloniere, having heard that a huge block of marble had been excavated at Carrara, conceived the brilliant idea of setting a

second gigantic figure on the other side of the entrance. On the 10th of May, 1508, therefore, he wrote the following letter to the Marquis of Massa, Alberigo Malaspina, the owner of the quarries: — "To the Marquis Alberigo. If you can do so without inconvenience to your lordship, we should be grateful if you would keep that marble for us, as we wish to make a statue to adorn the piazza in this city, and by this your lordship will be able to gratify all the Florentine people." [1]



HERCULES AND CACUS, BY BACCIO BANDINELLI.

On the 4th of Sep-

[1] Lettere alla Signoria. Gaye, "Carteggio Inedito," vol. ii. p. 97.

tember, in the same year, Soderini again writes to the Marquis of Massa, saying that he has understood from Raphael of Reggio that the marquis is anxious to have the block removed, and that as soon as Michael Angelo comes to Florence he will send him to Carrara to diminish the marble, that it may be more easily carried.[1]

But it seems that Michael Angelo was not at this time at the disposal of the Gonfaloniere; for another letter from him, dated Florence, 16th December, 1508, makes excuses for the artist's not having yet gone to Massa to block out the statue, saying that the Pope had only allowed him twenty-five days in Florence (when he came to finish the bronze David for the Marshal de Gies), and adding, "There is no man in Italy capable of preparing the marble but the artist himself, for another man not knowing his design might spoil it. Therefore," says Soderini, "till he comes, which we hope may be soon, we can satisfy neither your lordship nor ourselves."[2]

Michael Angelo's idea was to make a colossal

[1] Lettere alla Signoria. Gaye, "Carteggio Inedito," vol. ii. p. 97.
[2] Gaye, "Carteggio Inedito," vol. ii. p. 107. Manni, "Sui Sigilli Antichi," vol. i. p. 38.

Hercules slaying Cacus, the width of the block at its base lending itself well to the introduction of a prostrate figure, and he had, in preparation, made a design and small model of his conception. The subject was well chosen; the figure of Hercules, being the sign of the seal of the Republic, could also be taken as an emblem of the power of Florence in triumphing over her enemies. The Judith, by Donatello, and the David, were also, as we have already said, emblematical of the same power, and each was eloquent of the times in which it was created.

Michael Angelo's design for this statue is still extant in the South Kensington Museum; it is, although only a small sketch, very powerful, the two figures being coiled together, the one in victorious power, the other in writhing defeat.

Stirring events, however, befell Florence. During these tempestuous times Michael Angelo was at work at Bologna and at Rome, seldom visiting Florence. Then came the return of the Medici, with the Spanish army to assist at their restoration; and Pier Soderini was compelled to resign. The Medici, with one of their family in the Papal Chair as Leo X., held sway with all their former power and more than their former

arrogance. And during all these exciting times Hercules was still lying a useless block of marble at Carrara, but not forgotten. The sculptor Baccio Bandinelli had cast longing eyes on it, and, being endowed with more ambition and vanity than genius—though he possessed talent of a certain kind—felt within himself that if he only had the marble and the opportunity he could produce a work which would throw Michael Angelo's David into the shade, and prove more than worthy of being placed as a *pendant* thereto. Moreover, he would eclipse the great sculptor on his own ground by choosing the selfsame design. Hercules and Cacus was a subject quite familiar to him, for in his early youth, when his father, proud of his talent, gave him a studio, and had some marbles brought for him, one of his earliest efforts was a group, five feet high, of Hercules standing over the dead body of his foe.

In 1515, when Leo X. made his triumphal entry into his native city, Bandinelli seized the opportunity of showing the Medici that a second Michael Angelo was at their service, by placing a colossal model of Hercules, in clay, under one of the arches of the Loggia on the Grand Piazza, as one of the adornments of the Papal triumph. Time went on, and still the block was

lying at Carrara. Leo X. died; Clement VII. was elected, and by him Michael Angelo was employed on the tombs of the Medici in San Lorenzo. In 1525 the Commune of Florence again bethought itself of the large block of marble which Pier Soderini had bought seventeen years before, and would have employed Michael Angelo, as had been first intended. But the Fates were against him in this matter. He had in some way made an enemy of Bandinelli's friend Domenico Boninsegni, the superintendent of the works for the façade of San Lorenzo, and he, as a matter of revenge, used all his influence with the Pope to give the marble to Bandinelli, representing to His Holiness that if such a large work were given to Michael Angelo the works for the facade and chapel of the Medici would have to be neglected. He, besides, cunningly suggested that by employing two rivals in art, the spirit of emulation would make them produce better works.[1]

This is Vasari's account; and a document, cited by Gaye from the "Ricordi di Firenze Riccardiana," though making no personal mention of Boninsegni, agrees in fact with it. It says that "on the 20th of July, 1525,

[1] Vasari, vol. iv. pp. 247, 248 (Milanesi's edition).

the Commune of Florence had a piece of marble brought from Carrara, nine braccia high and four and a half broad at the base, to make a figure to put on the piazza, and having in Florence one M. Angelo, the best master of sculpture in the world, the people desired that he should work it, he having been so successful in the David, and that from a marble mutilated by other hands. But he being employed in the tombs of the Medici for Pope Clement, the said Pope intended that another Florentine sculptor should undertake it, that the sepulchres should not be left incomplete." Bandinelli, therefore, was sent to Carrara to diminish the marble according to his design, and it was brought to Florence in the month of July.

It may be imagined how mortifying this decision was to Michael Angelo, for a rivalry which amounted to antagonism had for years existed between the two artists. Indeed, some had said that spiteful injury to the cartoon of Michael Angelo while it hung in the Papal Hall was due to the enmity of Bandinelli. He was not of a character to let such a triumph go by unvaunted, and it is most likely that the great spirit of the higher genius was much vexed at this time by the self-laudation of the lower artist.

The entrance of the Hercules into the world commenced with a baptism, for as it was being drawn on shore at Signa, having been brought so far up the Arno, the block in some manner slipped from the holdings and fell heavily into the river, where its own weight soon buried it in the alluvial mud. Many means were tried to recover it, but in vain; it refused to be rescued. We may well imagine Baccio Bandinelli's state of mind at this stone—which was to have made a great step to fame for him—thus sliding from him, especially as the wits of the day seized the incident as a good subject for their satires. Verses in Italian and Latin were poured forth. One sonnet by Giovanni Negretti was especially admired, in which the poet said that the marble, in its despair at the idea of being chipped by a bungler, had flung itself into the Arno.

But the Pope had given his command that the stone was to be drawn forth, and such a command must be obeyed. The superintendents cast their eyes about them, and at last begged the aid of Pietro Rosselli, an ingenious builder, who forthwith started for Signa, where he turned the course of the stream, and laid the very banks low. At last, by levers and windlasses, the marble was brought on dry land, and thence, by means

of beams placed lengthwise, it was rolled slowly on its toilsome way to Florence.

Whilst it was still on the road, Baccio made the discovery that the design he had showed to the Pope would not fit the dimensions of the marble. This was the more annoying, as the wax model had especially pleased His Holiness, being full of muscular power and life. But the sculptor's genius had expanded beyond the dimensions of his material, and, much mortified, he set to work to make other designs. Alas! a Pegasus with his wings clipped cannot soar. None of the models were equal to the first; they came out one after the other stiff and lifeless. The Pope chose the best among them, and as soon as the block of marble had arrived at the House of Works for the Duomo, and been there raised on end in the courtyard, Bandinelli set to work. He first made a model in clay of equal size, which, however, every one concurred in condemning as greatly inferior in merit to the first small model, and as wanting in animation.

The clay model finished, Baccio began to block out the lower limbs, when lo! before they were even fashioned, the face of the times changed again. Rome was sacked, and Florence revolted; the Medici were

again driven out. Baccio, having private quarrels of his own, and fearing for his life in the absence of his patrons, buried his treasures in the garden of his villa, and fled to Lucca, leaving his Hercules barely blocked out in the House of the Works of the Duomo.

The republican government, with whom Michael Angelo went heart and soul, and on whose behalf he became warrior and built fortifications during the siege, could think of no better recognition of his services than to award to him once more the gigantic block which had eluded his grasp twice already. The decree of the Signoria giving it to him is dated August 22, 1528, and concedes the aforesaid block to Michael Angelo Buonarotti, "who should carve out and make therein one or more figures, as shall please the said Michael Angelo, to be placed in the position which this Signoria shall decide."[1]

He intended to give up the subject of Hercules, and make a Samson with one or two Philistines under his feet.

Public affairs, however, allowed the great master no time for sculpture. The armies of the Prince of Orange and the "Palleschi" allies were crowding the hills

[1] Gaye, vol. ii. p. 98.

around Florence. Michael Angelo threw away the scalpel for more potent weapons, and flung himself into the defence of his beloved San Miniato. No sooner, however, was peace concluded than the Pope, Clement VII., resuming his former authority, bade Michael Angelo finish his works in the chapel of the Medici at San Lorenzi, and, ignoring the pompous decree of the Signoria, set Baccio Bandinelli to work again on the giant.

While he was engaged in this, Baccio had apartments in the Medici Palace, but used the hospitality so badly as to become a spy, writing to Pope Clement of all the doings and sayings of the inmates of the palace. By this behaviour he made an enemy of Duke Alessandro, who threw every impediment in the way of his employment. Baccio, however, having a pope to back him, was not to be defeated by a duke. He betook himself to His Holiness, who came to meet Charles V. at Bologna, and carrying some presents (a relief in bronze and a medal with the Pope's likeness), made such good use of his opportunity, that, before he left, His Holiness promised to exert his authority with the duke to allow Bandinelli to finish his Hercules.

The triumphant Baccio returned to Florence with

100 gold florins of the Pope's money in his pocket, and a letter intimating to the duke that he must be allowed to complete the giant. The permission could not be refused. He now set to work in earnest, and, allowing no hand but his own to touch the figure, he was so industrious that by the year 1534 it was finished.[1] Even this time his design would not fit, for the foot of Cacus had to be pieced out. The Duke Alessandro, who seemed determined to do as little as he possibly could, let the statue remain unheeded, till Baccio, again appealing to his patron in Rome, Pope Clement, obtained from him a second letter to the duke, asking him to supply the means for erecting the statue in the piazza, as he was desirous that the sculptor should proceed to Rome as soon as it was done, to commence two tombs, for himself and the late Pope Leo X.

Accordingly the space intended for it was closed in with planks, and the pedestal erected. The pedestal is not very artistic; it only contains an inscription to Pope Clement, and the busts in relief of that Pope and Duke Alessandro.

Cavaliere Settimani, in his "Memorie Fiorentine Inedite," gives the following account of the erection of

[1] Vasari, "Life of Bandinelli."

the giant :—"On May 1st, 1534, Baccio of Michelagnolo, goldsmith, Florentine, having in the Opera di S. Maria del Fiore made a statue of Hercules slaying Cacus, the said statue, standing thus upright and finished in the said House of Works, was drawn in three days, by means of beams and pulleys, into the piazza, and in the said day was seen placed on the corner of the steps of the palace towards the Loggie dei Signori. The block of marble of which the statue was made was one of the finest that ever came into Florence, but on the other hand one of the worst worked, in the judgment of men wise in sculpture."

The two famous architects, Baccio d'Agnolo and Antonio da San Gallo, undertook the care of its removal and placing.

Like the David, too, Hercules was covered with papers of verses ; but, alas ! instead of eulogiums they were all satires. One said that if Hercules' head were shaved there would not be a cranium large enough to hold his brains, and that his face was as much like a lion or a bull as that of a man. Others compared the torso to a sack of water-melons put on end. Some said the legs were so badly set that one could not tell on which of them Hercules was stand-

ing, and if he were standing on both he ought to be falling down. Others declared that the foot seemed to have a fire under it. Benvenuto Cellini, in the course of a quarrel with Bandinelli at the Medici Palace, coolly quotes all these expressions of public opinion, and when the angry Baccio asks him what fault he can find with his design, Cellini answers that he has not seen it, but that as one who designs well must needs execute well, he imagines that the design is equal to the statue.[1]

Against these criticisms we may place that of Michael Angelo, who, when a cast of the head of Cacus was sent him, admitted that it was a good artistic work, but said he would like to see the whole statue. And we have also the testimony of Vasari, who, with subtle justice, writes: "Had that artist received from nature an amount of grace and facility equal to the labour and pains which he was ever ready to impose on himself, he would certainly have been entirely perfect in the art of sculpture." [2]

Even adverse criticism could not discourage Bandi-

[1] "Vita di Benvenuto Cellini," Lib. ii. No. 70.

[2] Vasari, vol. iv. p. 258.

nelli from an attempt to reach perfection, for on seeing the giant placed in the full light of day, he recognized defects in it himself, and having it re-enclosed with planks, gave the finishing touches, by bringing out the muscles more forcibly. The Duke Alessandro in person took means to silence the scoffs of the populace, by imprisoning the authors of the worst satires, under the plea that the insult was to himself as the possessor of the statue. On the day in which it was uncovered, Baccio, not daring himself to face public criticism, sent a friend to hear what was said, and, as might be expected, abused him when he brought back such scanty praise.

His patron, Pope Clement, showed himself more appreciative than the sturdy Florentines, for he gave Baccio an estate near his own villa of Pinzerimonte as a present, besides the payment he had agreed. He was besides made a Cavaliere or Knight of the Order of S. Jacopo. So he departed to Bologna to continue a colossal statue of Prince Doria, for which he had already received half payment, and Hercules was left to stand for centuries, unmoved by public opinion.

III.—THE NEPTUNE.

It was in the time of Cosmo I., when artistic Florence was set in a ferment by the rumour of a third block of the finest marble, about twenty feet by ten, having been excavated at Carrara. What were not the potentialities of such a block! Each of the many sculptors who thronged the court of Duke Cosmo felt the powers of a second Michael Angelo awake within him: it might be his high destiny to create a colossus whose fame should surpass that of the "David," and certainly throw Bandinelli's "Hercules" into the shade. Times were no longer as they had been when those two artists were rivals for public commissions. Then, it was well known, that if the commune had the power,

PROPHET, BY BACCIO BANDINELLI, ON THE CHOIR IN THE DUOMO.

Michael Angelo got the order ; and if it depended on the Pope, he gave it to Bandinelli. But since that time all was changed ; the court of Cosmo was filled with a crowd of artists. There were Gianbologna, Moschino of Pisa, Baccio Bandinelli, Vincenzio Rossi, Vincenzio Danti, Benvenuto Cellini, and Bartolommeo Ammannati, all eager to win this potential piece of marble.

Bandinelli was first on the scene. He went to Carrara in 1554 to see the block, and forthwith tried to secure it for himself by giving the owner of the quarry a certain sum as "caparra" (or earnest-money) to keep the marble for him. After which he returned to Florence to induce his patrons, the duke and duchess, to buy it. Now the duke desired to place a splendid fountain on his piazza, and thought this marble would come in well for a central statue, perhaps of Neptune. Baccio from time to time showed different models to the duke, but no settled commission was given even in 1559, for in that year the owner of the quarries wrote to say that unless the purchase were completed he must cut up the piece into smaller blocks, for which he had great demand. Accordingly Vasari, the duke's artistic factotum, was despatched to pay for the marble, and

send it to Florence. Bandinelli, to facilitate its transport, chiselled off the superfluities according to his own design, and thus rendered it difficult for any other artist to make use of it.

This huge mass was slowly being conveved up the Arno on a raft, when Benvenuto Cellini happened to see it as he went to Poggio a Cajano, and so grieved was he to think of the "povero malfortunato marmo" falling into the hands of his rival and enemy, that he determined to come to its rescue by getting it for himself. He took its measure, and hurrying back to Florence, made several small models, which he took to the ducal villa at Poggio a Cajano, to commence his siege on the reigning powers, and oust Bandinelli from his "post of 'vantage." He found the illustrious family at table, and being admitted, in accordance with the duke's easy familiarity with artists, forthwith plunged into the subject, telling them of the height of excellence to which the Medici had raised the Florentine school of art, and the great responsibility that rested on Duke Cosmo's shoulders to keep it up to the mark, and how very unfair it would be to other artists of genius if such a piece of marble were given to the man who had spoiled Michael Angelo's great design by

making a patched-up "Hercules" out of his splendid marble, and this without giving others a chance to display their talent, &c., &c. He ended at length with a proposal that the duke should allow all the sculptors to compete for the commission, each making a large model, the duke himself to be judge of their respective merits. He added slily, "Even if your excellency has made up your mind to give it to Bandinelli, a little competition will do no harm; it will only make him put his best work into his model." The duke was rather pleased with the idea, and the "gara dei scultori" was decreed. But the duchess shook her head angrily as Cellini left her presence, and made up her mind decidedly that Bandinelli should not be ousted. Now began the great contest: the duchess and Bandinelli against five other sculptors, the duke alone and neutral.

Benvenuto, knowing that he had a strong opponent in the duchess, set himself to propitiate her. He had made a very beautiful crucifix in white and black marble; and one day he presented himself to her excellency, telling her of his work, its great beauty, and the expense it had been to him, adding that though he prized it too much to sell it at any price, he would

make her a magnanimous present of it if she would promise neither to favour nor to oppose him in the competition.

Womanlike, the duchess took umbrage at this strange request, and said, "Then you esteem neither my assistance nor opposition?"

"You see that I value them," replied Cellini, "for have I not offered you a gift that I esteem worth 2,000 ducats? All I want is that you give my talent and skill a fair chance of gaining the prize."

The duchess rose and quitted the room in great disdain.

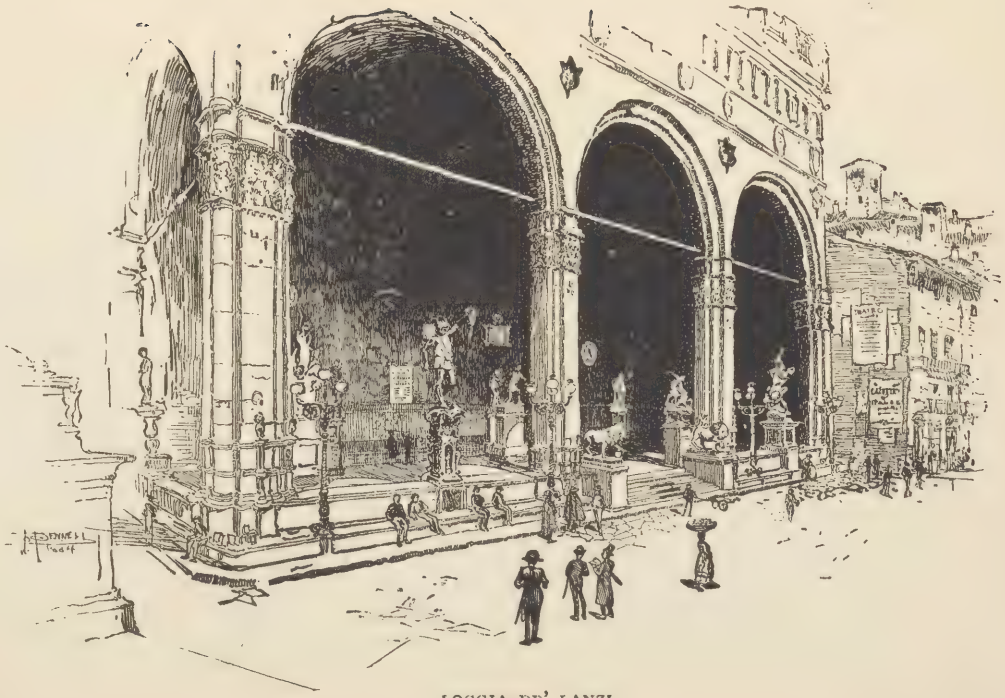
Meanwhile Bandinelli sent to Rome for his friend Vincenzio de Rossi to come and help him, for he felt himself secure of the commission. But even to him came that proverbial "slip between the cup and the lip." While all these hopeful preparations were going on he was in reality working at his own tomb, and what is strange, his rivalry to Michael Angelo was the remote cause of his death. That great artist had in hand a beautiful "Pietà," which he designed to have placed on his tomb when he should die. (It is now behind the high altar in the Duomo.) Bandinelli, not to be outdone, decided to sculpture a "Pietà" for

himself, but could not for a long time find a site to please him in any of the churches. At length a place was accorded him in the church of the Servites (Santissima Annunziata), in the chapel of the Pazzi family, but with the proviso that none of their arms and devices were to be moved. The same care was not taken, however, to preserve the ashes of the unknown dead, for Gaye gives a letter from Lelio Torelli to Cosmo I., telling how Baccio wanted to remove the tomb of a soldier to make room for his "Pietà," and adding that there was no one living to object to this removal.

The site given, Bandinelli with feverish haste had the sepulchre made, the "Pietà" placed on it, and then brought hither the bones of his father; and now, his tomb being ready, he went home as though he knew his hour was come, and after an eight days' illness he died! Cellini declares it was of despair at knowing the great marble was lost to him. Vasari says he over-exerted himself in working at the tomb, and that his great emotion in moving the remains of his father and placing them with his own hands tried his system too severely. Modern science, allowing the same cause, would probably call the malady "blood poison-

ing" or "typhoid." Whatever was the reason, poor Baccio was removed from the strife for the great marble; and, their most formidable rival gone, the other sculptors rushed forward to the contest more eagerly than ever. Benvenuto besieged the duke boldly with his models. Ammannati, with less direct tactics, set in order a train of mediators, beginning with Georgio Vasari, and reaching the duke at last. Vasari should take Ammannati's model to Rome, where he was going with Cardinal Medici, son of Cosmo I. There he should obtain Michael Angelo's approval and recommendation, through which irresistible power the duke was to be moved to give him the marble. The stratagem succeeded so well that Cosmo I. ordered a large studio to be made under the Loggia de' Lanzi for Bartolommeo Ammannati. To this he was doubtless urged also by the duchess, who had been heard to declare "that she had helped Bandinelli living, and she would help him dead, insomuch that with her consent the marble should never fall into the hands of Cellini."

Now was the furious soul of Benvenuto wrath within him, and hearing of the concession granted to Ammannati, he forthwith rushed to the duke at Pisa, and



LOGGIA DE' LANZI.

wrung from him the permission to enclose a similar studio for himself in the Loggia de' Lanzi. That building was accordingly boarded up and divided into two; the duke provided clay, wood, and workmen. The twin studios were placed back to back, and were jealously guarded, that the occupant of the one should not see what went on in the other, and whilst they worked with ardour, new combatants came to the fray.

Gianbologna or Jean Boulogne, the Fleming, afterwards more famous than any of the others, was at that time a young artist employed by Cosmo's son, Don Francesco, who is better known in story as the husband of Bianca Capello. Don Francesco gave his *protégé* permission to make a model in competition, and a studio was prepared for him in the cloisters of Santa Croce. Another scion of the ducal house, Messer Ottaviano de' Medici, brought forward a *protégé*, named Vincenzio Danti, a Perugian, and gave him a room in his own house wherein to prepare a model. Whether Rossi would have been faithful to the interests of his employer Bandinelli had he lived is not known, but that he tried to obtain the commission after his death is certain. Gaye gives a letter to Cosmo dated 1560, in which Vincenzio Rossi says "that

if his excellency would only look at his colossal 'Theseus' he would not be deceived into giving the work to any one else."

One day when the two principal models were well blocked out and only required finishing, Georgio Vasari took the duke to see that of Ammannati, which he (Vasari) had been helping to forward for some time. The duke gave full attention to the model but withheld his opinion, and telling one of his suite, a certain Messer Gianstefano, to go and see if Cellini's model was sufficiently advanced for him to see, he passed into the other studio, expressing himself much pleased also with the design of Benvenuto, who from that moment felt himself sure of winning. But just at this time he fell among traitors at Vicchio, where he had bought some land, and in the house of a certain Sbietta had poison given him in a sauce at supper. Returning to Florence, he worked one day at his giant and then took to his bed. This was the breach at which the duchess entered victorious. Under the plea that Cellini was ill, she induced the duke to give the order for the "Neptune" to Ammannati, who, in his selfish triumph, was the first to let his rival know of his success. So Cellini remained in his bed, and it took two doctors six

months to eradicate the poison from his system ; how long the poison of envy rankled in his mind there is nothing to show, but he always spoke of the "poor unfortunate marble" having fallen from bad hands into worse. He had not forgotten it even in 1570, for in a letter to the duke claiming 1,500 scudi payment for the very crucifix which he had offered the duchess as a present, he reminds his excellency of his broken promise regarding the commission for the " Neptune." Ammannati, being left master of the field, applied himself earnestly to the work of the fountain with such despatch, that the government began to bestir themselves to prepare a site for it. For this purpose, on the 1st of March, 1563, the lion or *marzocco* was moved from the left-hand corner to the centre of the Ringhiera of the Palazzo Vecchio, and that part of the Ringhiera which projected on the left was levelled, the foundations of the fountain and the base for the " Neptune" in the centre being placed on that spot. The marble basin and statues were not, however, erected till 1571. The gigantic figure of Neptune, familiarly called by the Florentines "*Il Biancone*," rises to the height of ten braccia ; he stands on his car drawn by four sea-horses of different coloured

marbles, three Tritons are at his feet. The basin is octangular, and is adorned with bronze figures of marine deities and satyrs, very finely modelled. The water was brought from the fount of Genevra, a mile out of Florence. The statue of Neptune has been severely criticised, and it is true there is some incongruity between the size of the colossus and the utter want of strength and power in his face and figure. Some blame may be given to Bandinelli, who cut down the marble in the first instance so as to make it more easy of transport, but so carelessly as to cramp any subsequent design. Whatever its faults, the Neptune has become as much of a household god to the modern Florentine, as the David was to his *cinque cento* ancestor. If he is away from Florence for any length of time, he will probably sigh, "Oi! oi! mi pare mille anni di revedere il Biancone" ("Oh dear! it seems a thousand years till I see the great white statue again!").

SAN MARCO, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER II.

A Library of Codices.

A LIBRARY of 6,000 Codices! The very thought is suggestive of the enthusiasm of book-hunters before the age of printed books. How many pilgrimages must have been undertaken to far-off convents and churches! How many long hours must the eager students have employed in copying them! How many lily-branded gold florins must have been spent to obtain them! And how much more precious than florins were they to their possessors! Of course the 6,000 were not collected by one man, nor even in one age. The Laurentian Library of Florence, as it

now stands, is a conglomerate growth of four centuries, but two names stand out in history as the founders of its nucleus: Cosimo di Medici, *pater patriæ*, and Nicolao Nicoli, whose bequest was the beginning of the Libreria Medicea Pubblica, at San Marco. In later days these two collections were united, and, with the addition of others, were placed in the beautiful library which Michael Angelo designed and Vasari executed, to be a treasure to all future students.

The story begins with that purest type of a Florentine scholar and humanist, Nicolao Nicoli. His father was, like most burghers, a rich merchant, and would have made his four sons follow his business; but Nicolao—who had been a scholar in the Greek school of Emanuelo Grisolora, and studied philosophy and theology under Luigi Marsigli—gave his mind to higher things; and when, on his father's death, he obtained his share of inheritance, Nicolao chose his own course of life—that of letters. His theological studies had counteracted, in a great measure, the humanizing effect of the classics, and Nicolao remained all his life a Christian in the highest sense of the word.

An eager bibliophile, he collected, bought, and

copied books wherever he could hear of them ; and a proud and happy man was he one day, when Leonardo Bruni sent him a present of a Cicero copied by himself. But, unlike most bookworms, he was as willing to lend his treasures as to enjoy them himself, and at his death a list of 200 volumes was found to have been lent to different people. He encouraged studious youths to come and read at his house, and gave them valuable assistance by his learned explanations. His "Ammianus Marcellinus" was written out in his own hand. The "Orator" and "Brutus" were brought to him from Lombardy by the ambassadors of Duke Filippo Visconti, when they came to demand peace in the time of Pope Martin. Nicolao heard that a complete edition of Pliny existed at Lubeck, and induced Cosimo dei Medici to send and obtain it ; and if any Florentine went to the East or to Greece, Nicolao would give him a list of authors which were not in Florence, that he should seek them. Indeed, his services to literature were many and great. It was he who kept alive Cosimo's interest in the classics, and his influence which made Fra Ambrogio and Carlo d'Arezzo what they were.

A learned quartette used to meet almost every day

at the convent of the Agnoli, in the room of Fra Ambrogio; they were Nicolao, Ser Filippo, Maestro Pagolo (Paolo), and Cosimo dei Medici. Ser Filippo was the adopted son of a notary, Ser Ugolino, and by his learning he had risen to be one of the chief men in Florence, and was member of the Signoria. Although he never let a law pass that was not for the universal good of the city, yet, he found time, in the midst of public works, to hold learned converse with his friends, and to explore the book-shops of Florence, and often to copy out whole authors whose works he did not possess. He is described as a handsome man, of a cheerful aspect, and he wore a long purple robe reaching to his feet. Nicolao's usual costume was a red *lucco;* but while Ser Filippo lived plainly, with only an old woman for servant, Nicolao carried his innate refinement into the minutest details of his home life. His table was spread with the finest linen, and furnished with lovely porcelain; his drinking-cup a "coppa" of crystal. Maestro Pagolo was as well read as his companions, and though an astrologer, Vespasiano assures us that he was a most religious man. Last, but not least, was Cosimo dei Medici, whose financial genius had given him command of the

Florentine "borsa," which at that time led the commerce of the world; and yet finance was but one among many talents. Vespasiano describes him as a grave citizen, a friend of serious men, and hater of buffoons and light characters. He recognized genius wherever he saw it, and was as friendly with simple Donatello, who was uncomfortable in the grand clothes he gave him, as he was with Messer Leonardo Bruni, or Ser Filippo the gonfaloniere, or that learned man Poggio Bracciolini.

It was about 1434, after Cosimo had spent some time in exile in Venice, where Nicolao Nicoli bore him company, and had by one of the sudden vicissitudes of the day returned there a second time in state as ambassador, that his conscience accused him on account of certain money whose acquisition had been doubtful. He sought counsel of Pope Eugene, and at his suggestion decided to set apart 10,000 florins to rebuild the Convent of San Marco, to which the Pope had lately removed the chief seat of the Dominicans. This sum did not half finish the work, which he wished to be thorough. He not only rebuilt the convent, but furnished it. The artistic monks were set to work, and while Fra Angelico was

WITH THE NOVICES OF SAN MARCO.

painting divine scenes on the walls of the cells, his brother illuminated choral books and psalters.

About this time, Cosimo's friend Nicolao Nicoli was taken ill, and instead of going to Fra Ambrogio, he had an altar placed in his room, and the Frate daily came to him to say mass, and read St. Paul's Epistles. When he died in Fra Ambrogio's arms, he left his 800 precious books to his city, with the proviso that they were to be of public service to all students. Forty citizens named in the will were to be intrusted with this bequest, and Cosimo proposed that the new public library should be in San Marco. So Michelozzi the architect designed the noble pillared room, which now contains Fra Benedetto's choral books, and here all the neatly written codices were placed, all bound and inscribed with Nicolao's name. Here, also, were removed at a later time the books which Boccaccio had left to the monks of Santo Spirito, packed in boxes, and for which Nicolao had had a library made at his own expense, that people might have more free access to them. Vespasiano says [1] that "when the books were placed, Cosimo studied the inventory to see what books were wanting among those necessary to form

[1] Vespasiano, "Vita di Cosimo di Medici," par. ix.

a complete library, and that he sent far and wide to obtain them, and those which were not to be bought he caused to be copied." This sounds a little obscure, for one would imagine a library could never be complete; but we learn from Vespasiano—the bookseller who formed and furnished the libraries of San Marco, the Badia, the Duke of Urbino, of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, near Siena, and of Cesena—that the learned Thomas of Sarzana, afterwards Pope Nicolas V., who had become an autocrat of literature, had formed a scheme or inventory of the authors he considered necessary to the formation of a library, and this inventory he sent to Cosimo when the San Marco library was being formed.[1] And this was the guide good Vespasiano followed in all his subsequent undertakings as a furnisher of bookshelves. The scheme included, as befitted an ecclesiastic, a larger proportion of theological than classical writers. All the Greek and Latin Fathers were represented; then the modern doctors, such as Thomas d'Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Ales, and Archbishop Antonino of Florence. Then came the Greek philosophers, with the commentaries on them by the doctors above

[1] Vespasiano, "Vita di Papa Niccolo V.," par. vii.

named; then the Latin historians, Cæsar, Livy, Suetonius, Plutarch, Sallust, Valerius Maximus, &c., and a more modern "History of the World" by Ser Zembino; and lastly, the Latin poets and dramatists, including Terence, Virgil, Ovid, and Plautus. The Greek poets seem to have been entirely absent.

Had the Laurentian library depended solely on the book trade of Vespasiano di Bisticchi or the limited requirements of the monks, content with a library on a set scheme, it would have remained without its greatest treasures. The other and chief source from which it was supplied, was the private library of the Medici family, whose desire for amassing classical treasures was unrestricted by the ecclesiastical bias which narrowed that of Pope Nicolas V. Cosimo employed Vespasiano, to give the monks of San Marco and the Badia all they thought necessary, but his own shelves were enriched by precious codices gathered from all parts of the world. The collection he began, was continued by his son Piero, and his grandson Lorenzo il Magnifico.

It may be said that Cosimo made the library and Lorenzo enjoyed it. In Cosimo's time, collecting books, founding buildings, and stocking libraries

seemed the great object of life. In Lorenzo's, the stored-up learning had passed into the minds of the Florentines, and there were literary societies, debating clubs, commentating societies, &c., and all those brilliant assemblies where the mind of man saturated with classical lore, like the wick of a lamp with oil, flamed up and dazzled the whole world with its light. There was scarcely a friend of Cosimo who had not helped to form his collection. Poggio Bracciolini penetrated the cellars of the old convent at St. Gall, Switzerland, and brought Quintilian to light, and found (or some say stole) Livy from Herseld Convent. Leonardo Bruni discovered Cicero's "Letters" at Pistoja, and Landrini brought his "Treatises" from Lodi. Fra Ambrogio translated the "De vita et moribus philosophorum" of Laertius Diogenes into Latin for Cosimo; but it was under strong protest,[1] for he had made up his mind to write nothing that was not religious. He translated into Latin the works of St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Athanasius, and others. Many valuable Greek codices found their way to Cosimo's shelves from the hands of the learned Sicilian, Giovanni Aurispa, who made a voyage

[1] Vespasiani, "Vita di Frate Ambrogio, or Traversari."

to Byzantium in 1423, and brought home 258 Greek MSS.

In Lorenzo's time, Andrea Giovanni Lascaris, the Greek, was sent to Constantinople after that city had fallen into the power of the Turks, to rescue as many MSS. as he could from the invader's hands. Lorenzo never lived to see the treasure of 200 codices, which he brought back, in 1492, but most of them were placed in the Medici library.

Here we have, then, two great collections of ancient MSS., beautifully written and illuminated as books were before printing multiplied them, and rendered the delicate work of the scribe superfluous—the public Medicean Library at San Marco, in which Nicolao Nicoli's bequest was incorporated, and the private collection of the Medici family in their own palace in Via Larga, the growth of three generations of book lovers.

It was through many vicissitudes that they became united at last.

The present library in San Lorenzo, the founding of which was attributed to Pope Clement VII., is really due to Lorenzo il Magnifico, as is proved by a letter written to him by Vespasiano, praising his

scheme of building it, and the letter of Lascaris dedicating his "Antologia Greca" to Piero, son of Lorenzo; in which he speaks of it as half finished—"illam bibliothecam tuam, quae jam semi-constructa conspicitur.[1]

This Piero was exiled on Nov. 9, 1494, and from this date begin the vicissitudes of the codices. As soon as he was proclaimed rebel, Piero set himself to render secure the treasures of his house by choosing two Sindachi (trustees) to take care of them. The first were Bernardo Capponi and Benedetto Tanai de Nerli. They had time to save the books by packing them in seventeen cases, and sending them to the convent of San Marco for security; but when the French entered Florence with Charles VIII. on Nov. 17th, they, with the assistance of some disaffected Florentines, robbed the Medici palace of artistic treasures worth 100,000 scudi.

The city had too much respect for literary gems to let the boxes remain placed about in the cells of the monks, so in 1495 the Signoria took the affairs of the rebel Medici in their hands, and decided, in a

[1] Enea Piccolomini, "Delle vicende della Libreria Medicea privata." Archivio storico Italiani, vol. xix. serie 3, p. 105.

council held August 31, 1495, that the cases should be opened, and the most valuable books brought to the Medici palace there to be preserved. A committee of judgment was formed, including the Greek Lascaris, Gio. Antonio Vespucci, Marsilio Ficino, and Vittorio Soderini. At the same meeting, Soderini was bid to send back Politian's copy of the Pandects. Lascaris was afterwards ordered to return books he had borrowed.

The Signoria had no easy office in the custody of the Medici belongings, for many claims were made on them for debt. Among these was one of 2,000 florins to San Marco, for which the books seem to have been given in pledge; and on Jan. 24, 1496, the Signoria decreed that the monks might sell books to that value and pay themselves.

Then on Feb. 10, 1497, the council decreed the restitution of sixty-seven volumes to the heirs of Francesco Sassetti, which he had lent or given in pledge—*commodaverunt* is the word used in the document—to Lorenzo de Medici in 1491.

There was another debt due to Charles VIII., king of France, and this the Signoria decided to pay by giving up the Medici collections; but from the fact

of the convent of San Marco paying to Filippo de Comines, the agent of Charles VIII., the sum of 1,000 ducats, besides the other 2,000 lent before, it would seem they were permitted to keep the books in pledge. They evidently began to exercise proprietorship over them, for they revised the inventory, and looking over the list of books which had been lent, sent to different persons to claim them. A fine of fifty florins was imposed on any one who had borrowed books from the Medici and did not restore them. The Florentine ambassador in Paris himself went to Lascaris to claim several codices which he had; and Gualterotti, the ambassador at Milan, recovered three Greek codices from Giovanni da Castiglione. Politian rendered up a "Hippocrates," and Ficino and Mirandola returned other copies of classical authors. Thus between the Signoria and the Dominicans, the cases containing Lorenzo's MSS. had a double guard—the Signoria maintaining a right over them as trustees of the rebel's goods, and the Dominicans hoping that they would remain theirs in payment of the loans made. The great care taken of them on all sides proved the reverence the precious codices were held in by that age.

But now a greater peril menaced them. Savonarola was Prior, and in place of civil war, religious sects filled the city with clashing parties. The Arrabbiati besieged the convent on April 8, 1498, and while Baccio Valori defended the door of the church, and Fra Bartolommeo—then Baccio della Porta—fought for the altar, a band of spirited youths so well guarded the library that its treasures remained unhurt; at least the inventory only bears a mark against one book, "Perso la nocte, addi Aprile 8, 1498."

A month after the siege of San Marco, the Signoria removed the books from the convent and placed them in the "Sala dei Dieci di liberta e pace," one of the council chambers in the Palazzo Vecchio. It is thought this was decreed as much as an act of hostility to the Dominicans, as from care of the books themselves.

The Dominicans proceeded on the former hypothesis, for they then sent in a claim for their 3,000 florins.

After remaining seven months in the palace, the Signoria placed the books, now disposed in twenty-seven cases, in the convent of the Badia; and it was here that on Dec. 12, 1498, a new estimation was made, and it was decreed to pay in books the Domini-

cans and the family Salviati, who also had a claim. The estimation took a long time, and the final division of the books was not made till June 19, 1500, when the monks of San Marco took two-thirds, and the Salviati one-third. It seems, however, that Cardinal Giovanni dei Medici was in treaty with the Salviati family in April, 1506, to buy back some of the books from them.

It was two years after this that the convent, after all its struggles to retain the treasure, was obliged, from financial distress, to sell the Medici library to Cardinal de' Medici, for the price of 2,652 ducats.

The entry existed in the Archives of S. Maria Novella, in the hand of Fra Francesco Maria Gondi, a monk of that convent who was also Procurator of San Marco, that "on April 29, 1508, he sold to the cardinal of S. Pietro in Vincola, the library of thirty-two cases which had belonged to the Medici." [1]

In 1510 the library, then in the palace of Cardinal Medici in Rome, was open to students there, and

[1] Some historians, such as Picolomini, say this purchase was made by Cardinal della Rovere; but no proofs remain. The document I have quoted was seen by Bandini, who quotes it in his catalogue of the library, 1752. Certain it is that in 1510 the Medicean library was in the palace of Cardinal Medici in Rome.

Francisco Albertini gives a glowing account of it in his work "De Mirabilibus novæ et veteris urbis Romæ," lib. iii. f. 168, printed in Rome in 1510.

Cardinal de Medici became Pope Leo X., and after his death the library fell into the hands of Cardinal Giulio de Medici (Clement VII.), who decided to bring them back to Florence, and carry on Lorenzo's half-finished design of the library in San Lorenzo. Unfinished it was doomed to remain, for on the death of Clement VII., in 1534, the work was abandoned, and the books remained in the rooms of the priests' house in San Lorenzo, "a prey to dust, moths, and rats," as Varchi says.

As soon, however, as Cosimo I. was proclaimed duke, he began to carry out his ancestor's designs. The books were collected, the building completed, at least in the interior, by Vasari—Michael Angelo's death occurring before the work was done—and the opening of the Laurentian Library was celebrated by a bronze medal, with Cosmo's likeness on one side, and the door of the building on the other with the motto, "Publicæ utilitati." Its vicissitudes were over; for four centuries the precious codices have rested, chained to their shelves, in the repose of that silent

FROM DONATELLO'S ORGAN GALLERY, FORMERLY IN THE DUOMO OF FLORENCE.

hall, where students look on them reverently, and tourists with a vague curiosity. The first librarians were Baccio Valori and Giovanni Rondinelli.

Other streams of learning have flowed into this calm lake. The Medicean Public Library from San Marco was incorporated in it, and the books with Nicoli's name have found a resting-place there. In 1755, when the Grand Duke Francisco I. bought the Gaddiana Library, consisting of 1,110 manuscripts and 1,451 printed books, 355 of the finest codices were placed in the Laurentian Library, and 28 in the Archives; the rest, with the printed works, were put into the Magliabecchian Library. The Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo removed here 600 codices from the convent of Santa Croce, and the valuable collection of Oriental MSS. which were in the Pitti Palace. Codices found their way here from the Badia, the Riccardiana, and Magliabecchian libraries and other sources, till it grew to be the finest illustrative history of literature before the age of printing that the world possesses. Its principal gems are the Medicean Virgil, the earliest known MS. which was revised by Tertius Apronianus in A.D. 494, and the Pandects of Justinian, found at Amalfi in 1135 by the Pisans,

who preserved them with great veneration for some centuries, till the Florentines captured Pisa in 1406. Once a year a deputation visited the place where the book was kept, and the magnates, churchly and secular, stood bare-headed, while the books were opened with great ceremony beneath a silken pall, and surrounded by many waxen tapers. There are also two fragments of Tacitus, for one of which, containing the last six books of the Annals, Pope Leo X. paid 500 golden florins, when it was discovered by Arcimboldi in a monastery of Westphalia; a Quintus Curtius of the tenth century, a copy of Cicero written by the hand of Petrarch, and Terence copied by Politian. The early MSS. of Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, &c., are extremely interesting. Benvenuto Cellini's MS. of his autobiography has also a place here.

The MSS. are arranged in long reading benches like church pews, with a catalogue of the works on each bench at the end. There is a cloister-like silence and calm always reigning in the library, where the sun shines through the painted windows of Giovanni da Udine with a "dim religious light," in harmony with one's feelings of veneration in such a shrine of intellect.

CHAPTER III.

Old Italian Organs and their Builders.

IN visiting Italian churches one is often struck with the sight of certain ancient organs, thrust out of view at the back of choirs or in distant corners of sacristies. These dilapidated instruments are in rough, worm-eaten cases, and have rattling keys of yellow and brown wood, often possessing half an octave of pedals, acting on ropes. Altogether they give an idea of church music in its most primitive form. We can fancy them surrounded by a group of those quaint expressive chorister boys, with square cut hair and

long white drapery, which Ghirlandajo delighted to paint.

It was with great interest I found one day a pamphlet by "Cesare Guasti," entitled "Di un Maestro d'Organi del secolo XV.," which gave a sketch of the life of the very man who might have made these old organs.

The subject proved so attractive as to induce further researches by the aid of the Magliabecchian and more modern libraries, the result of which I give in the following sketch, which may form some useful notes for a future historian of the organ.

I.—RUDIMENTARY ORGANS.

Although writers like to assert of the organ, as of many other things, that its origin is lost in obscurity, it is possible to trace almost every step in its growth from the days of Tubal Cain or the great god Pan, when its music existed in the wind-blown reeds.

Without doubt the first wind instrument was the natural reed: next the artificial flute and trumpet.

The first step to plurality of pipes seems to be the Egyptian *mam* and the Etruscan *subulo*, or double

pipe, said to have come from Lydia. The Assyrians also had this flute ; the Greeks called it *diaulos*, and a specimen of one found in a tomb at Athens exists in the British Museum.

From duality we reach plurality, in the *syrinx* or pan-pipes, called by Ovid *arundo cerata*, or wax cemented pipes.

The next step was obviously to keep the many pipes supplied with wind from a common source. Here we have the *piva* (*tibia utricularis*), or shepherd's pipes, on which Marsyas was so great a proficient as to excite Apollo's envy. These were a leather skin with several pipes inserted, which were played by pressing the fingers on the different holes.

The Greeks called them *ascaulos*, and in Rome they were the favourite instrument of the Emperor Nero. The last remnants of these still linger in the Highland pipers and the Pifferari, who go down to Rome at Christmas time from the Abruzzi. It is supposed that the word *sumphonia*, in the Book of Daniel, refers to a bagpipe. The antiquaries who support the Hebrew theory with regard to the Etruscans, will be interested in comparing this name with that of "Zampogna," given to the bagpipes by the Italian peasantry. Now,

while the western Aryan nations developed the piva out of the subulo, the races farther east enlarged the syrinx into something of the same kind; but approaching still more nearly to the Aryan, they mounted their pan-pipes on a wind-chest and played them with the fingers. There are instruments of this kind on the Assyrian sculptures; the air-box is supported by a band round the waist of the player, who blows with one hand while he fingers the holes of the pipes with the other. Mr. Barker[1] gives a description of an ancient sculpture found at Tarsus (2,000 years old), which represents a kind of organ with pipes and bellows, pressed by the hand—in fact, pan-pipes with bellows.

The Chinese and Japanese have their *cheng*, a box with a number of tubes of different lengths inserted into it. Each tube has a small metallic tongue like our accordion; the player blows into the air-box by a spout at the side, and presses the holes of the tubes with his fingers. In Laos and Siam similar instruments are found, although different in form.[2] The

[1] "Cilicia and its Governors," p. 260.

[2] Carl Engel "Music of the Most Ancient Nations," chap. i. p. 18.

Hindoos have an instrument called *poongi* or *magoudi*, which is a hollow gourd or cuddos nut with pipes inserted; this is the music used by the *sampuris*, or snake-charmers.

Next comes the wonderful Magrepha of the Hebrews—that nation of psalmody—described in the Talmud (tract Erachin) as standing in the temple at Jerusalem. It was a case containing ten pipes, each pipe capable of emitting ten sounds by means of different valves. It had, moreover, two pairs of bellows and ten keys, which were played by the fingers.[1] Drawings of this great organ, which many writers consider apocryphal, are to be found in some older treatises on Hebrew music, and there is one in Hawkins' "History of Music."[2] The ten pipes and holes seem to prove the existence of the pentatonic scale according to Carl Engel's theory.

The organ spoken of in the Book of Job, xxi. 12—"They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice in the sound of the organ"—is supposed by Engel to be the *ugah*, a kind of pandean pipe, the word in Hebrew being *oogav*. The Septuagint, however, has trans-

[1] Engel's "Music of Most Ancient Nations," chap. vi. p. 297.
[2] Vol. i. p. 256.

lated the word "psalmos" (a psalm). The same word occurs also in Job xxx. 31 in conjunction with harp, as if it were a musical instrument. The Diodati version of the Bible gives the word *organo* in both places, with a marginal note "Sampogna" (bag-pipes).

II.—EARLIEST ORGANS.

It would be difficult to say who was the inventor of the organ proper, though it is as easy to trace the transition from the compressible wind-bag to the fixed wind-chest and artificial bellows, as it is to see how the graduated reeds of Pan grew into the *piva* through the more archaic *tibia* and *subulo* of the ancients. Some attribute the invention to Archimedes 220 B.C.; others to Ctesibus, an Alexandrian barber, about 180 B.C. Gibbon speaks of the Romans in the time of the Emperors amusing themselves with hydraulic organs.

It is a mooted question what these instruments were; it has been thought that they were the same as the Greek *hydraulos*, a kind of water-flute; but that there were really organs, although small and primitive, is proved by the representation of one on

a coin of the Emperor Nero. It consists of a box as large as a small table, and ten pipes inserted in it. There is no indication as to the way in which it was played; but this information is supplied by Cassiodorus, who describes an organ in Theodoric's time as a tower made of divers pipes which have a full and copious voice: "et ut eam modulatio decora componat, linguis quibusdam ligneis ab interiore parte constructur quas disciplinabiliter magistrorum digiti reprimentes grandisonam efficiunt et suavissimam cantilenam."[1]

From this it would seem that the Roman organs were similar to the still more ancient ones, and that the fingers played on the pipes themselves with this difference, that instead of pressing the holes they pressed tongues of wood inserted into the pipe. Here is the link wanting between the modern key-board and the simple pipe. As to the hydraulic part of the instrument, descriptions are not wanting in the old writers —Hero of Alexandria, Vitruvius, Claudian, and Tertullian, for instance—descriptions not very clear, but still intelligible. The water was only the regulator of the wind, not the tone producer; the chest had two closely shut reservoirs, of which one was filled with

[1] "Gloss maed et inf Lat. voce Organare."

water and connected with the other, so by means of counter pressure it gave the wind equality and power.

An illustration from the Theodosian Obelisk at Constantinople shows that about the fifth century the larger organs were blown by weight, two men being represented standing on the bellows. *Balgentreter*, or "bellows-treaders," were common for many centuries, and may even now be seen in some remote continental churches.

After the fifth century the organ begins to have a recognized history. It was brought to Europe from the Greek empire, and used in religious devotions about A.D. 657. Pope Vitalianus introduced it into the Western churches in 658.

The Greek Emperor Constantinus Copronimus sent one of these instruments to King Pepin of France in 750, which was placed in the Church of St. Corneille at Compiegne.

They are again mentioned as having been imported from Greece under Charlemagne, A.D. 800. A monk of St. Gall named Notker Balbulus gives a very exaggerated account of one in his time.[1]

Charlemagne's son, Ludovic the Pius, A.D. 826,

[1] "De rebus bellici Caroli M.," lib. II, n. 10.

had an organ constructed by an Italian priest, which proves that Italy was not much, if at all, behind Germany in their construction. The story is in the annals of Eginard,[1] who says that a Venetian priest named Giorgio went from Venice to Ludovic, boasting that he knew how to make organs. The Emperor, no doubt willing to emulate his father, sent the priest to Aquisgrana (Aix la Chapelle), giving an order that he was to be provided with everything needful for the construction of the instrument.

Ermoldo Nigello, an historian of the ninth century, mentions, in an elegiac poem on Ludovic the Pius, just such an organ, which he says was hydraulic.

That the Germans were proficient in organ building at or before this time is certain. A letter is extant from Pope Giovanni VIII. to Bishop Anno of Freysing, in Bavaria, in 880, praying him to send him "a good organ, and an artist who knows how to play and construct."[2]

Aldhelm, an Anglo-Saxon writer (A.D. 709), says organs were in use in England in his time, and that the external pipes were gilded.

[1] "De gestis Ludovici Pii."

[2] "Miscellanies of Baluzio," lib. 1, p. 490.

The Benedictine Wulston relates that Bishop Elphege had one made for Winchester Cathedral in 941, which had four hundred pipes and twenty-six bellows, and required seventy men to blow! It would be perplexing to imagine how one man could play all this, but it seems there were only ten keys, and forty pipes sounded when each was pressed.

We can believe when Charlemagne's historian says the organs have the sound of thunder, but are not credulous when he goes on to say, "they can also imitate the soft lyre." As only two notes could be played at a time, one with each fist, the organ was only used for the melody and an accompaniment in octaves or fifths. Guido, who lived in the eleventh century, says no other harmonies were known.

There is a curious illustration in the Saxon psalter of Eadwine in Trinity College Library, Cambridge, of an organ with two players and four blowers at different bellows, all working very energetically.

Pratorius, who wrote the "Syntagma Musicum," 1619, speaks of an organ built by Nicolaus Faber at Halberstadt in 1391, which had twenty bellows, and one in Magdeburg with twenty-four. Faber's organ had fourteen diatonic and eight chromatic keys, three

manuals and some pedals, but it is supposed the latter were added by its restorer a century later.

Some old artists have given representations of a small portable organ called the "regal"; it is generally placed in the hands of St. Cecilia or an angel. Good illustrations of it are a picture in the National Gallery by Melozzo da Forli, and Raphael's exquisite "St. Cecilia." There is a very good painting of a regal, played on the lap and blown from the back, in Taddeo Gaddi's allegorical fresco of the sciences in the Spanish chapel of Santa Maria Novella.

The English chronicler, William of Malmesbury, says that hydraulic organs were made from A.D. 999 to 1003 by a monk called Benedetto Gerberto, who was afterwards elevated to the Papal rank as Sylvester II.

From these notes we gather that in feudal times this art, as well as most of the liberal arts, remained in the hands of the monks. Later, when under the commonwealths and dukedoms arts and professions were protected, we find notices of laymen who made organ building their profession. The first of whom any authentic documents remain seems to have been the "Maestro d'Organi," who is the subject of Signor Guasti's able paper.

III.—ITALIAN ORGAN BUILDERS.

In the year 1393 there was a certain worthy baker at Prato, called Paolo di Piero, who had a wife, Paola, and five children, the youngest of whom, Matteo, was then two years old. Their names are all in the tax-papers of that year, preserved in the Archives of the State. The papers of 1408 show the household to have increased in worldly wealth, and to have become possessed of a house. In 1427 the family was broken up. The father dead, the widow working on a podere at Figline, the eldest son married and possessing houses, and Matteo—married to a wife Betta, and possessor of the third of a house—is nominated as "Matteo di Paolo di Prato, che fa gli organi."[1]

There was quite a group of organ builders at Prato in the fifteenth century, but none are spoken of prior to Matteo. The Lorenzo di Giacomo who made the organ for the Duomo of Siena (1459), San Petronio of Bologna (1471), and San Francesco of Cortona (before 1474), is supposed to have been his fellow-worker or scholar; and Benricevuto di Ser Lionardo di Prato is

[1] Cesare Guasti, "Di un Maestro d'Organi," p. 2.

known to have been his disciple. But from whom Matteo learned the art, there remains nothing to tell us.

That he was a proficient in it, his wide-spread fame shows, for he was called to all parts of Italy to furnish the churches with organs. The first of which we have any record are those—for they are always spoken of as "un paio d'organi"—of the Baptistery of Florence in 1425, for which Richa says he was paid 400 florins, and had the old organs given him.[1] It is said that Squarcialupi made an organ for the Baptistery in 1476, but it is more probable that he only repaired this one.

So great was his occupation in Florence at the epoch of the revival of art, that he took up his residence there; and while Brunelleschi reared his dome, grand and rosy tinted, into the air—while Ghiberti and Donatello laboured at their beautiful doors and statues, and Filippo Lippi and Benozzo Gozzoli covered the church walls with glorious frescoes—Matteo of Prato made the organs for those boys to sing hymns to, whom Ghirlandajo has made immortal in the lunettes of the arches of Santa Fina's chapel at San Gemignano. The other artists gave the outer beauty; he furnished

[1] Richa, "Notizie intorno delle Chiese Fiorentine," v. 39.

the music which is the soul of worship. Those were grand times, when art sprang into being on every wall and roof, and made Florence a joy and a beauty for ever.

It is probable that Donatello was the means of bringing Matteo to Florence, he having formed a friendship with him while carving the exquisite pulpit of the Cintola outside Prato Cathedral. The commission for it is still extant with Matteo's name as witness, and there is a letter in the Archives written by Matteo on behalf of Donatello, praying immediate payment for one part of this pulpit, as the sculptor wanted money for the *feste* which were coming on.

The next organ that Matteo had a commission for was that of the Duomo of Florence; Donatello and Luca della Robbia being at the same time desired to sculpture a pergamo to adorn it.[1] And on August 4, 1422, Matteo received the first instalment of his payment, fifteen florins, another twenty florins being paid in June the following year. Donatello's and Luca's exquisite sculptures of singing boys and maidens are still to be seen in the Bargello in Florence; but Matteo's

[1] "Archivio dell' Opera di S. Maria del Fiore," lib. deliberazione i. a.c. 192.

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA'S GALLERY.

instrument was less durable, for in 1426 it had to be repaired. About this time he was employed by the Lucchese to make an organ for the church of San Francesco; but the war between Florence and Lucca, and the plan of Filippo Brunelleschi to drown Lucca in the waters of the Serchio, evidently alarmed our good organ builder, who did not fulfil his engagement till after peace was made, when the Lucchese sent a letter to the "Domini Florentini,'[1] begging them to compel Matteo to keep his promise. He must have done so to their satisfaction, for in 1442 he had a commission to furnish the Cathedral of Lucca with an organ. Meanwhile he still worked at that for the Duomo of Florence, which was so far finished in 1434 that we find an order was given to Angelo di Lazzaro to make the case, and Matteo was paid on account 100 gold florins. Antonio Squarcialupi, Lorenzo's friend, the musical genius of his time, had already been appointed organist, and the restored organ was to have been opened when Pope Eugennis IV. came to consecrate the Duomo in March, 1436; but owing to Matteo's numerous engagements it was not ready, which annoyed the Arte della Lana extremely. In the next year they called on Matteo to forfeit the

1 "Archivio di Stati in Lucca." Lettere degli Anziani, No. 551.

money advanced; but we find them still waiting in 1438, which proves that though he was dilatory, yet no better organ builder was to be found. Extension of time being allowed him, he still procrastinated, and in December of that year the work was taken out of his hands and given to Arrigo di Migliore Guidotti, Matteo being bound to refund his pay advanced in rates of forty florins a year, and to restore within six days 2,000 lbs. of lead and 300 lbs. of tin which had been provided for his work.

The metals he returned promptly, but the florins were not forthcoming, and in 1442 he wrote a piteous letter to the Opera del Duomo, begging to be released from payment for the love of God, and saying "if he had to pay it he must beg bread to feed his little daughter."

Apparently Arrigo Guidotti proved a bad substitute for Matteo, for the members of the Opera were not satisfied with his work, and the Prato organ builder was recalled to finish it, which he did satisfactorily in 1448. During these years he made an organ for the Badia in Florence, for which he had ninety gold florins, together with the old organs, valued at thirty florins. In 1450 this was also repaired by him, or, more properly speaking, completed, the case and a large pipe being

added. He also made the organs in the church of Or San Michele in 1428, those of the Annunziata in Florence[1] in 1453, in which he was assisted by his pupil, Benricevuto di Ser Lionardo.

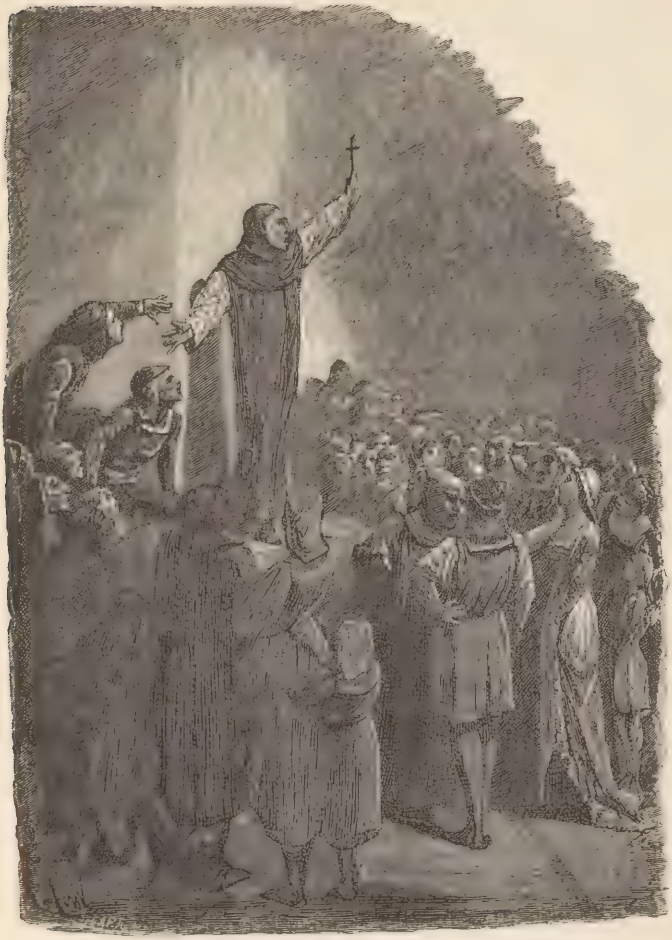
In 1451, he was paid in three rates for an instrument in the church of St. Egidio, near the Florentine Hospital, and in 1452 another for St. Ambrogio; also for San Lorenzo, in 1461, and that of San Frediano.

So great was his fame, that the Arte di Calimala gave him a house in Via degli Spadai in Florence, and there he died, September 24, 1465, and was buried in the church of San Lorenzo, leaving his pupil and partner, Benricevuto, his heir.

It is impossible to say how much this humble organ builder had to do with the great religious revival which followed the renaissance of the arts and literature at this period. It is certain that before Savonarola poured his thunders of eloquence over Florence, there was a strong revival of religion which took a musical form.

Men, women, and even children, assembled in the churches to sing "Laudesi" or spiritual songs. These were composed by Lorenzo il Magnifico himself or by

[1] "Carte del Convento dell Annunziata di Firenze," ac. 75.



SANVONAROLA PREACHING.

his mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, or Luigi Pulci, Giambullari, and others.

Every Saturday, after *nones*, the congregation sang them, the priests taking alternate parts.

"*Ad ogni Laude si mutavano i Cantori, e finito il detto canto a suono d'organo, di campane, e di voce si ricopriva la devota Immagine di una Madonna in atto di chiederne la benedizione.*" [1]

There were evening processions of Laudesi, and great expense was gone to for wax lights. Every company had a captain. Gio, Lotteringhi Stanaiolo was leader of the Laudesi of Sta Maria Novella.

What pictures one can imagine of the scenes and music of these old organs of Matteo's! What crowds of earnest singers sang to them as they sounded under the fingers of Maestro Andrea, or of Antonio Squarcialupi, who played so well that Lorenzo de' Medici kept him constantly in his house, and when he died wrote his epitaph, in which he says, "The city of Florence preserves the grateful memory of one whose hands knew how to charm with sweet music." He was a maker as well as a player.

That Lorenzo was very fond of organ music may be

[1] Dell Rosso, "Osservatore Fiorentino," vol. i. p. 127.

seen by the inventory of his house,[1] which mentions no less than five different organs. The descriptions of some of them are rather curious ; for instance, an organ of pasteboard (*carta-impastata*) beautifully worked in open work on a base of carved walnut-wood, and with four chandeliers on four children's figures, with three bellows and leads (*piombi*). Another is an organ of tin and wood, with *gravecordo* (which might mean clavecord) worked with foliage and open carving, gilded, with two bellows.

"A reed organ, one reed to a key-simple," seems more explicit ; but "A cardboard organ, made like a snail-shell, with open work, in a wooden case with two bellows"—this is certainly a little obscure, and must have been, to say the least, curious.

Some of the Florentine artists took to making reed-organs, and Benvenuto Cellini writes, "My father in those days made wonderful organs with *canne* (or pipes) of wood ; he made also *gravicemboli* (harpsichords), the best and most beautiful that one could see."

The elder Cellini was Pifferaro to the Signoria, but Lorenzo and Piero de Medici removed him from the band that he might not neglect his art of carving in

[1] "Inventario di Casa Medici." MS. in the Archives of Florence.

ivory, in which he excelled to a great degree. Many of the exquisite ivory carvings now in the Bargello might have been by his hand.

The next century (sixteenth) produced some still more famous Italian builders, of whom the chief were the family Antegnati of Brescia, who made a hundred and forty organs in different provinces. Graziadio, son of Bartolommeo Antegnati, was the most exact and successful, and his son Costanzo was his worthy successor, being not only organ maker, but player and composer. He was the author of a rare old book called "L'Arte Organica," printed at Brescia in 1608. Bartolommeo, his grandfather, supplied the cathedral churches of Milan, Como, Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, and Mantua with organs.

The Milanese Cristoforo Valvassori was also famous as an excellent maker.[2]

IV.—GERMAN IMPROVEMENTS.

Whether or not the Germans can claim the invention of the instrument, it is undeniable that most of the

[1] Vita di B Cellini, pp. 9 and 10.
[2] "Ency. Ital.," voce Organo.

modern improvements were of German origin; and a slight mention of a few of these would not be out of place.

The invention of the pedal is attributed to an organist of Nürnberg, named Bernhard, in 1470, whom the Italians claim as organist at Venice, but it is probable that he was only an improver, because two old pedal pipes, with the date 1418 engraved on the kern or partition, were found by Marx in an ancient organ at Beeskow, near Frankfort on the Oder. There are also the set of pedals in Nicolaus Faber's before-mentioned organ of 1361, at Halberstadt, to be accounted for—if indeed they were not added at its restoration in 1494 by Gregorius.

The next improvement was that called by Italian writers "bilancia pneumatica" or "prova pneumatica," an invention for equalizing the pressure of wind; thus not only giving to each register the even supply of wind necessary for its just intonation, but also making it possible to supply wind at different pressure to the different stops, according to their several characters. This important step was due to Cristiano Förner, organist of Wettin, in the seventeenth century.

The free reed was introduced by a German named

Kratzenstein in the eighteenth century, but its real origin is quite prehistoric. It may be well to explain that flute pipes have the air forced in through a lip or sharp edge of wood or metal, while reed pipes have a vibrating tongue of metal or wood. The principle of the reed pipe was known to the ancient Egyptians, for flutes have been discovered in the tombs with a kind of thick straw inserted into them for the purpose of vibration.[1] Moreover Kratzenstein's free reed came in reality from that most conservative nation China, where it might have existed for thousands of years. It happened that Kratzenstein was at St. Petersburg during the reign of Catherine II., and seeing there a *cheng*, of which the pipes are constructed with a free reed, the idea came into his mind of applying the principle to organ pipes.

Reed pipes are of two kinds—those in which the vibrating tongues strike against the plate in which it is set, and the free reed, which vibrates in a space cut for it as in our accordion and harmonium.[2] The striking reed, which had the most power and penetrating tone, was almost exclusively used in English organs until

[1] Engel's "Musical Instruments," p. 12.
[2] Engel's "Musical Instruments," p. 4.

lately, when the more delicate free reed was introduced from France.

Other improvements, such as the present form of the clavier or key-board, had already been brought in as natural results of the renaissance of the fifteenth century. The old form of the keys went out when the new system of notation came in and fuller harmonies were required. After the tenth or twelfth centuries, the organ beater (*pulsator organorum*) became the organ player, no longer using his fist, but his fingers.

The notation in use among the ancients was most likely the Greek one of Tespandro of Lesbos, 650 B.C. He named the notes by letters, probably the five vowels, as the old scale was pentatonic. The Romans and the Hebrews also used the vowel sounds. Boetius introduced fifteen letters, which Gregory the Great, considering the equal tones in each octave, reduced to seven.

Modern notation, which began with the invention of the stave, first of four lines and after with five, is attributed to Ubaldo, a Benedictine monk, born 848; he was either French or Belgian. It has been said that the notation at present in use was brought to Italy by the Longobards; but it is more likely that Guido of

Arezzo, for whom it is also claimed, improved Ubaldo's method.[1] However this be, the semitones or black notes were added to the clavier in the fourteenth century. Huebald and Guido, writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries, say that the progressions of fifths, fourths, and octaves were the only harmonies known in their days. If they could only have imagined the glorious harmonies of a modern great organ!

There is an interesting old work on organ building in the Magliabecchian Library in Florence. It is a reproduction in five or six folio volumes, dated 1766, of the work of Bedos de Celles, who lived some centuries earlier. In it we find that "to give wind to an organ of 4 metres 80 centi-metres it is needful to have four bellows; and if there is a little organ besides, six are necessary. These are constructed as other bellows are, and are generally 1·80 metres long and 1·82 wide." This seems to explain the accounts in the early part of this paper, of organs which required a plurality of blowers.

[1] "Ency. Ital.," voce Organo.

V.—LATER ITALIAN ORGAN BUILDERS.

This can be little more than a list of the names of those through whose hands the organ continued to improve till it reached its present perfection in the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century lived a priest, Manduno Salmatino, who with his pupil, Callido, were celebrated makers in Venice. Callido himself made three hundred and eighteen organs. In Siena the cavalier Azzolino della Ciaja flourished, and in Pistoja was quite a company of organ builders—Filippo and Antonio Tronci, together with Luigi and Benedetto, Filippo's sons, and Ramai his pupil formed one group, while Pietro Agati and his son Giosuè were their rivals.

A curious old organ which has the name of Giosuè on a board across the foot of the pipes exists in the village church of Piteglio, in the Pistojese mountains. But it is evident he was only the restorer of a very much older instrument, for the inscribed board is decidedly newer than any other part. There are two bellows, which are worked by a rope so cunningly adjusted round two heavy windlasses, that by pulling one way, the left one turns in one direction and

the right the other; so by reversing the motion the right bellows are raised and the left lowered. There are eight pedals, which seem to be tuned in fourths; they move by means of strings or cords. The clavier has about two and a half octaves of wooden keys. But the most curious part is the appendage of two rough boxes, one on each side of the organ. One of them contains a huge drum; the other a monster pair of cymbals, of which the upper valve is hung, and the lower one strikes upon it on moving an iron arm, by means of a large pedal. The drum is beaten in the same way.

The country people evidently look on this arrangement, which they call "La Banda," as the finest part of their church music.

The two famous organs in the great monasteries of Montecasino and Subiaco were built by the family Catarinozzi; and that of the Benedictine monastery of Catania, said at the time to be the finest in the world, was by Donato di Calabria. Serassi of Bergamo not only made more than three hundred organs, but wrote a great work on the subject; and the brothers Lingiardi, of Pavia, ranked high. In these days, however, when the instrument is brought to such perfection, these an-

tique masterpieces seem to us only a foreshadowing of the perfect organ. And I have after all only been telling the story of the organ's remote ancestors and prototypes.

CHAPTER IV.

Florentine Mosaics.

ALTHOUGH the remote forefather of the Florentine mosaic may be found in such works as the incrustation of the Duomo with inlaid marbles, and the pictured floor of Siena Cathedral, yet its immediate parent in its modern development was the renaissance of gem cutting and cameo making; and the place of its birth was a certain casino or laboratory in which Lorenzo il Magnifico set his gem cutters to work. Like all the arts of the fifteenth century, that of intaglio was but a revival of the ancient work which exists in its Tuscan form in the Etruscan scarab, its Greek form in the

exquisite intagli of Dioscorides, Scylax, Polycrates, &c., and the Roman cameos. It was not abandoned even by the early Christians, for we have a cameo head of Christ of the seventh century, and the Gnostic gems of a still earlier period. The gem room of the Florentine gallery shows specimens of cameos dating from the fourteenth century. But there was no great revival till the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, who became an enthusiastic collector of the precious ancient gems, which were being found so frequently in Rome at that time.

His grandfather Cosimo *Pater Patriæ* was the first of the family to possess a treasure of the kind, a large intaglio of Apollo and Marsyas, and he valued it so greatly that he employed Ghiberti to make a beautiful golden setting for it.

Lorenzo, having his cabinets full of gems, was anxious to revive the ancient art, and invited artist-engravers from other cities as teachers. He caused many of the young artists who were being trained in the "Medici Garden" to become *intagliatori*, and gave them a studio in his own house. Here he supplied them with materials and lent them his precious antiques as copies, giving them also ideas for new subjects from

his stores of classic lore. The gems made in this studio are inscribed generally LAVR. MED. Several of them are in the gem room of the Uffizi, and one, a lion passant on red sardonyx, is in the British Museum.

From this school came the famous Giovanni delle Corniole (John of the Cornelians), who in 1498 executed the beautiful intaglio likeness of Savonarola, and a portrait of Lucrezia Tornabuoni on red jasper, both of which are in the Uffizi.

Another famous scholar was Domenico Compagni, called Domenico dei Cammei, who was as famous for his reliefs as Giovanni for his *incavi* (intagli or cut in). He made a cameo portrait of Lorenzo in a toga, on onyx, and an armed bust of Ludovico Sforza (il Moro) on a large ruby *balais*, or pink topaz.

Pier Maria di Pescia, who went to Rome when Raphael was excavating there, profited so much from his study of the antique that he became the finest gem cutter of his age. There is an exquisite "Venus and the Loves" by him in the Florentine gallery.

The revival was now fully established. The Duke of Ferrara and other princes followed Lorenzo's fashion, and had their court intagliatori. Bernardi

worked for Duke, Pope (Clement VII.), and Emperor (Charles V.), and Michael Angelo himself drew designs for him.

Matteo dal Nassaro went to Paris to cut cameos for Francis I.; Caraglio to Poland to engrave gems and medallions for Sigismund, king of Poland, in 1539; but Valerio de' Belli, or Valerio Vicentino (born 1479), remained in Italy, where his masterpieces are. By him is the wonderful casket of rock crystal which is now in the gem room of the Uffizi, after having been made a present to King Francis I. by Pope Clement. It has seventeen exquisite squares of intagli of subjects from the life of Christ. Several of the finest vases in the gem room were made by Valerio, for the Medici, of agate, lapis lazuli, jasper, cornelian, &c.

At the end of the sixteenth century intaglio as a fine art began to languish, the taste became debased, and instead of the exquisite *finezza* of work, curiosities of stone, either in colour or size, made the value of the gem. Of this time we have the huge cameo with the portraits of Cosimo and Leonora and their children, on an onyx seven inches and a half in diameter. A winged genius holding a torch flies above the group, and in the centre is a picture of Florence inserted in a circle.

Another remarkable work is the large cameo on sardonyx of several layers, representing a wild beast fight held on the Piazza della Signoria. It is a crowded subject, and a certain effect of perspective is obtained by the gradation of shades in the successive layers of stone, the animals being on a dark part, the background of spectators on a lighter layer.

There are in the same museum immense cameos of peacocks and grotesque subjects on variegated jaspers, and a really beautiful Venus cut in high relief on the pink layer of a rare stone, some Cupids holding a white veil behind her.

But perhaps the greatest cause of the decline of gem cutting in Florence was the different purpose to which precious stones were dedicated in the Medici studio. The same love of rarity, which we have spoken of, led Lorenzo and his successors to a lavish display of wealth of material. Tiny gems with the most delicate work of art on them no longer contented the Medici magnificence; they must have larger objects. The same hand which could cut a cameo, could shape a vase out of a single magnificent rare stone. The laboratory of cammeists which Lorenzo had established in his house grew to be a

factory of priceless vases, and was known as the "Casino di S. Marco." Those beautiful chalices and salt-cellars of intagli on rock crystal, of sculptured lapis lazuli and agate, adorned with chased gold and smalto and precious stones, which are preserved in the cabinet of gems in the Uffizi, were made here. Eighteen of the collection have the words LAVR. MED. engraved on them, five of which are oriental sardonyx, four red jasper, two amethyst, one yellow Sicilian jasper, one cornelian, one coloured jasper, one jasper di Grigion, and one petrified wood. These vases, with the crystal ones by Vicentino spoken of above, were given by Clement VII. (Lorenzo's nephew) to the Church of S. Lorenzo in 1533, to furnish the chapel which Michael Angelo designed. One of the most beautiful objects in the cabinet of gems is a vase of jasper de Grigion in form of a hydra, with a golden statuette of Hercules on it. There is also an elegant chalice of lapis lazuli, with handles in the form of sphinxes; the sides are adorned with a cameo of Bacchus, and one of a satyr between two dolphins. The most elaborate and least beautiful is a triumphal column in rock crystal about twenty-three inches high, the base supported on six agate

lions. The pillar is covered with a spiral of the most microscopic intagli, celebrating the wars and victories of Cosimo I.; the base has six medallion intagli of portraits of the captains of the army, and scenes from the life of Cosimo, all very crowded, tiny, and allegorical. The art is of the decline of the sixteenth century, so we may conclude it to be one of the last works produced in the Casino di San Marco. Not many artistic intagli were made there after that date, for Francesco I. turned the collection of precious marbles and agates to a different purpose, and thus gave birth to the Florentine *lavori di commesso*, or mosaic as it is called in English.

From cutting cameos which, by managing the different tints in the stones, should have the appearance of raised pictures, to really making flat paintings in marble, was but a step. Probably the idea came from Milan, for there a family of marble workers named Sacchi had for some generations (since 1511) been engaged in decorating altar fronts and chapels in the gorgeous Certosa of Pavia with inlaid marbles in the form of scrolls, flowers, and geometrical designs. On June 11th, 1576, Gasparo Visconti wrote to Francesco de' Medici telling him of a table made of

oriental stones, inlaid, with a thread of gold between each juncture, and praising its beauty extremely.

This was probably a work of the Sacchi family, and was on sale in Milan. If Francesco bought it, no doubt the idea of using some of the precious stones in the Casino in similar works was taken from this table, as the idea of encrusting the Medici chapel was taken from the Certosa of Pavia. In 1580, Duke Francesco sent to Milan for some masters of intarsia in marble; and Giovanni Bianchi, with five others under him, arrived to take the superintendence of the Casino. This arrangement did not suit the Florentines, who have a proverbial distrust of *forestieri*, as they call the people of another state. A letter was addressed to the Grand Duke by Cav. Gio. Seriacopi with the following complaint: "Che Maestro Giorgio Milanese e altri simile, non fanno altro che giuocare, et si serrono dentro, et mettono il ferro al saliscendo in modo che non si può entrare senza loro voluntà. Et del lavorare lavorano molto poco. . . . Appresso dico a V. A. S. che se la non remedia alle insolenzie di Maestro Giorgio et suo figliuolo, i quali anno cominciato a urtare insieme con Maestro Jacopo (Ligozzi) pittore

di V. A. S. quale sta nel Casino si romperanno la testa."[1] Whether the Milanese usurpers were kept in their places, or whether the Florentines continued the work alone, we do not know; but in 1588 the laboratory was by Duke Ferdinando removed from the Casino to the Uffizi, and a Roman named Emilio dei Cavalieri was made superintendent of all the artists, intagliatori, metal workers, &c., &c., employed there. This decree is dated Sept. 3, 1588.

The Florentines were not, however, content with what the Milanese had taught them. It was not enough to encrust the walls of the Medici chapel with panels, scrolls, and coats of arms; they must do something artistic besides, and make pictures in precious stones. The first inlaid picture was a likeness of the late Duke Cosimo, done in 1587, when Ferdinand was reigning. This so pleased the Grand

[1] From the "Archivio Mediceo"; also Zobi, "Notizie Storiche sui lavori di commesso in Pietre dure," pp. 183, 184. Translation: "That the Milanese Master Giorgio, and others of his kind, do nothing but play; they shut themselves up and bolt the door so that no one can enter without their permission. As to work, they do little of it. . . I will say to your Highness, that if some remedy is not found for the insolence of Master Giorgio and his son, who have begun to quarrel with Master Jacopo Ligozzi, your Highness's painter, who lives in the Casino, we shall have some broken heads."

Duke that he ordered a portrait of Pope Clement VIII. to be done, which he sent to Count Bardi in Rome as a present, with a letter in which he writes: "We, having invented a new mode of representing in inlaid marbles—not like ordinary mosaic, but with a more skilful artifice—the portraits of persons in natural colours, and true in every part of the face, we have had one of his Holiness done, which we send to your Excellency, &c., &c. From Poggio a Cajano, Oct. 10, 1601."[1] Probably the time of the artists of the Casino was employed in these works because the contemplated chapel was so much delayed. The marbles must have been prepared before the chapel was built, for the Milanese masters were sent for on the first idea in 1580, but the real work of encrusting the chapel did not begin till October 20th, 1613, according to Nigretti and Baldinucci.

Not only pictures in marble were made in this studio, but those wonderful inlaid tables, cabinets, &c., which are now in the Florentine galleries and the Pitti Palace. Bernardo Buontalento made an ebony escritoire about 1558 for Don Francesco Medici.

[1] Zobi, "Notizie Storiche," &c.

The front was adorned with pillars of jasper, lapis lazuli, and *elitropia* (a green stone with red spots); the drawers were inlaid with precious stones and had silver intagli, representing in miniature stories of Minerva. The upper part had silver and gold termini in place of pillars, and silver miniatures of the beauties of the day.

The grand ciborium intended for the Medici chapel was also Buontalento's work; it was in the form of a temple of the composite order, all gold and precious stones. Both these are now in the Pitti Palace.

Among the artists who worked in the Casino, where we have already mentioned Ligozzi, were Giovanni di Bologna, Jacopo Bilivert, and Anton' Maria Archibusiere. These three were the only ones exempted from obedience to the rule of the superintendent, Emilio de' Cavalieri. It was necessary to have some discipline, for by the time of Ferdinand the laboratory was an immense factory of art, in which were jewellers, miniaturists, turners, gardeners, confectioners, artists in porcelain, sculptors, painters, glass blowers, die sinkers, and arquebus makers, besides what the decree denominates as "*cosmograffi.*"

There is no doubt that this laboratory in the Uffizi

was the foundation of the existing Government establishment of Florentine mosaics which now has its seat in the Via degli Alfani." [1]

The following is a compressed list of the stones used in the Florentine mosaics :

SET I.—SILICIOUS STONES.

CLASS I.

STONE.	FOUND IN	COLOUR.
Amethyst.	India and Brazil.	Purple.
German agate.	Oberstein.	Undulating strata.
Agate.	Roman States.	White with grey marks.
Red agate.	India.	Red with darker marks.
Sardonyx.	Siberia and Madagascar.	Red and yellow, or yellow and blue.
Chalcedony of the	Grisons.	Variegated.
Chalcedony of	Volterra.	White, green, blue, &c.

CLASS II.

Focaie.	England and the Casentino.	A petrified conglomerate.

CLASS III.

Bloody jasper.	Armenia.	Dark red, or green with spots.
Jasper.	Siberia.	Violet, or red with green lines.
Jasper.	Italy, Egypt, and Spain.	Marked with lines, curves, or variegated spots.
Jaspers.	Sabina, Egypt, &c.	Variegated greys.
Ciottoli d' Arno.	The Arno.	Pebbles of shaded colours.
Pavonazetto	Flanders.	Variously marked.

[1] Zobi, "Notizie Storiche," gives a list of all the stones used in these mosaics, and of the artists and masters employed from the time of Francesco I., 1574, to Leopoldo II., 1824.

CLASS IV.

STONE.	FOUND IN	COLOUR.
Petrified wood.	Hungary and Black Sea.	Brown, with the marks of vegetable structure.

SET 2.—ROCKS.

Granite.	Corsica.	Quartz and mica.
Oriental granite.	Elephant Isle.	Black and dark mica.
Egyptian granite.	Egypt.	Red and black quartz.
Flowered granite.	Corsica.	Diorite with globular marks.
Verde di Corsica.	Corsica.	Green.
Amazon stone.	Amazon River.	Blue and green felspar.
Porphyry.	Antique.	Red with white spots.
Porphyry from	Sweden.	Light red and white.
Green porphyry.	Antique.	Green interspersed with crystals.
Serpentine.	Antique.	Green with felspar crystals.
Basalt.	Egypt.	Dark green.
Breccia.	Egypt and England.	Variegated conglomerate.
Lapis lazuli.	Persia and China.	Blue, sometimes spotted white or brown.
Jade.	India, Persia, and Bohemia.	Clouded green.

SET 3.—CALCAREOUS STONES.

Paragone.	Flanders.	Uniform black.

SET. 4.

Malachite.	Siberia.	Bright green, marked white, or dark.

There is a very interesting episode in the history of inlaid work in precious stones which is, I believe, not generally known. It refers to the supposed Florentine origin of the Indian decoration of temples and

palaces at Agra and Delhi in this style. Sig. Zobi, author of "Notizie Storiche sui lavori di commesso in Pietre dure," is the discoverer of this link.

Hearing a description of the Delhi mosaics and the Taj Mehal at Agra, from Mr. Charles Trevelyan, who was in Florence in 1839 on his return from India, Sig. Zobi, as well as Mr. Trevelyan, was much struck with the similitude in design and workmanship between these Indian mosaics or tarsia and the Florentine ones. It is well known that the Taj Mehal, the interior of which is incrusted with inlaid marbles in designs of flowers, scrolls, and *Etruscan vases*, was the first specimen of this kind of work in India. In the hall of royal audience at Delhi is a still more remarkable subject, Orpheus playing a violin and surrounded by various beasts and birds; it is in front of the throne. Now as it is not usual for Indian art to lend itself to the representation of nature as in these flowers; as Etruscan vases are not familiar in that country, and as Mahometans are not allowed to represent animated human figures, Sig. Zobi set himself to discover if any proof of Florentine artists having gone to India existed in the archives.

His research was rewarded by two or three signifi-

cant facts. The Medicean archives possess a document, dated 1608, which proves that Ferdinando I. demanded a passport for India from the king of Spain for four of his artists in *pietre dure*, to the end that they might go to seek and buy Oriental agates and gems, to continue the work of inlaying the interior of the Medici chapel.

Nothing is more natural than that the Mogul to whom they were sent desired to see a specimen of this work which was worth such labour in seeking materials; and nothing more probable than that the art was readily appreciated in a country so rich in materials for it. Whether the four Florentines remained and founded a school there, leaving their designs behind them—which in the earlier works are free and natural, and in later ones more set and Oriental in design—is not easy to prove. Neither is it known whether the lavish monarch Shah Jehan, when he built the Taj Mehal in 1643, availed himself of the assistance of one or more of these Florentines, or of their native scholars, to incrust the interior. The fact remains that the freedom and nature of the designs are utterly unlike any other native art, which is entirely conventional and religiously traditional. Mr. Trevelyan spoke of some ancient inscriptions

existing in the Christian cemetery at Agra, but he could give no clear account of them.

With regard to the tarsia picture which Mr. Trevelyan calls Orpheus, and which is placed in front of the throne at Delhi, Sig. Zobi got the following information from Mr. *Matealfe* (Metcalfe ?), agent of the English Governor-General at Delhi, in 1841.

The Hindoos have woven a web of mystery about the picture ; the figure is said to be that of Ullan Koora, the mother of the Tartar race, and daughter of the Star of Day (evidently a myth of the generating power of heat) ; but in that case, what significance would the music and listening animals have ? Besides, the figure is not a female, but a man draped classically in a single mantle of blue (lapis lazuli) lined with red (cornelian).

Is it not more possible that the Italian workman made the picture of Orpheus, a god familiar to him, as a specimen, and that the Hindoo possessor, the Mogul, adapted it to his own use by giving it a native meaning?

Doctor Bernier, author of " Memoires sur l'Empire du Gran Mogol" (Paris, 1671), says that he saw the imperial palace at Delhi at that time, and was struck by the resemblance to the Medici chapel in the cupola incrusted with coloured gems and marbles.

Two other documents in the archives attest a connection between Florence and the East. The Sopha (Shah) of Persia required an Italian architect, and the Grand Duke Cosimo II. sent Costantino de' Servi, who was at that time superintendent of the *pietre dure* works.

This may not have had much connection with the Delhi works, especially as Costantino was again in Florence in the end of 1610 (the letters patent from Cosimo are dated Nov. 1, 1609). But another deed, filza 54, dated in 1697, shows that Cosimo III. sent some artists to Goa, with a present of intarsia in *pietre dure* from the Florentine factory, as a contribution to the tomb of the Jesuit saint, S. Francesco Xaverio, in that city. So that there was without doubt a connection of Florentine mosaic makers with India in that century.

CHAPTER V.

The Bride's Room.

AMONG the cinque-cento Florentine citizens who gave themselves up heart and soul to the worship of art, none were more enthusiastic and appreciative than Salvi and Pier Francesco Borgherini, worthy scions of an old family, who probably had their name from being dwellers in the Borgo, or suburb of S. Apostoli, in those ancient times when the first belt of walls made Florence so narrow that that street was outside the gates.

The palace-building mania inaugurated by the Pitti, Medici, and Strozzi families, had spread through all

"CINQUE CENTO" CHAIR.

the city, and many a burgher rebuilt his ancient fortress, and turned it into a "Palazzo"—that form of house so characteristic of the Florentine streets in Renaissance times.

Of course Salvi Borgherini followed the fashion, and about A.D. 1500 he bethought himself of building a family mansion. He did not "go in" for size, like Luca Pitti, nor for pre-eminence in the weight of his building stones, like Cosimo de Medici; but he determined that his Palazzo should be a work of art. So he took counsel of an architect who was also an artist, by name Bartolommeo Baglione (better known in the annals of art as Baccio d'Agnolo). He lived in the Via Santa Caterina, and was not only *capo maestro* in the restoration of the Palazzo Vecchio, but the architect of several of the finest houses in Florence, the gem of his designs being the Palazzo Bartolini in the Piazza S. Trinita (now Hôtel du Nord).[1]

Baccio gave Borgherini the designs for his house, and being sculptor as well as architect, he carved with his own hands the lintels and architraves of the doors,

[1] In 1512 Baccio d'Agnolo was named *capo maestro* of the works at the Duomo, and his salary increased to twenty-five florins on March 31, 1512. Gaye ii. p. 483.

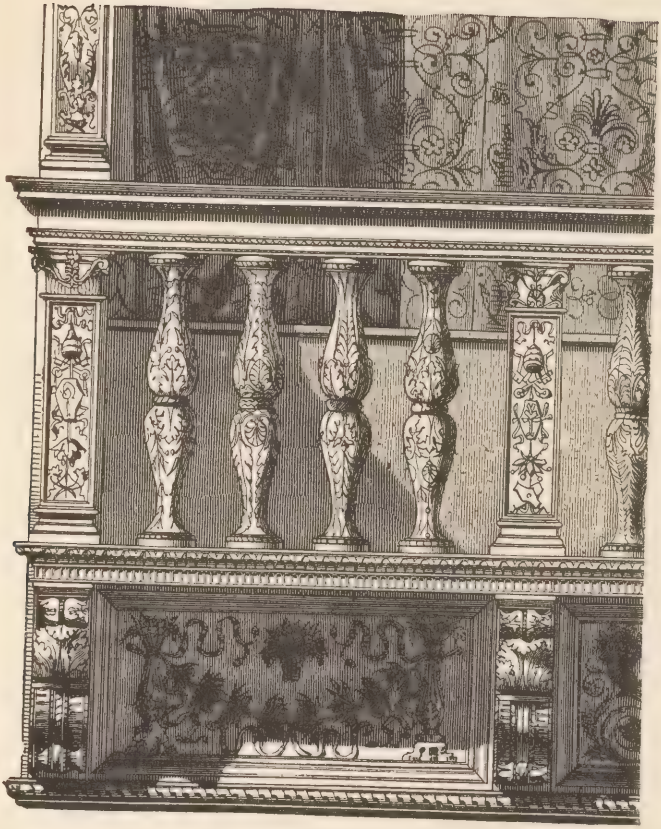
and in the front he put a bas-relief of the Madonna and Child, which is to be seen to this day, as are the windows he designed with the small round panes of glass, and their massive shutters decorated with brass nails.

The carving of the chimney-piece in the hall was confided to a young man of great promise named Benedetto da Rovezzano, who had lately come to Florence, and of whom artists said "the marble became flexible as lace-work in his hands."

In Cicognara (vol. ii. tav. 30.) an illustration of this chimney-piece is given, and it may be seen in its original state at the Palazzo del Turco in Borgo S. Apostoli, the ancient Borgherini palace.

It is a fine piece of sculpture. The sides are composed of Raphaelesque scrolls and trophies of arms in relief; the frieze across the front apparently represents the story of the Maccabees. On the right is a king on his throne talking to a warrior; on the left two horsemen and the statue of a man with a bow; in the centre a stake and seven men burning. Above are two sphinxes, two *genii*, and the arms of the family surmounted by a vase of fire.

So stone by stone rose the palace of the honest



"A CINQUE CENTO" HOUSE DECORATION.

burgher, and the impress of art was on every part. The house wanted a mistress, and this Pier Francesco supplied in his betrothal to the young Margherita Acciajoli, whose house was just at the back of Borgherini's, and faced the Arno.

It was a great match for Pier Francesco, for the Acciajoli were one of the most important families in the city. Their remote ancestors (as the name implies) were steel-workers, who had fled from Brescia to escape the tyranny of Frederic Barbarossa. Some of them had founded the monastery of the Certosa near Florence, and their sculptured effigies had lain there for centuries beneath the low arches of the crypt. Margherita's father, Ruperto, was one of the eminent men of the time. He had in 1510 been sent as Ambassador to the Court of Louis XII. of France, and he and his family gained the privilege of carrying a golden *fleur-de-lys* and the royal crown of France on the blue lion of their shield. In 1513 he was Ambassador to Rome at the Court of Leo X., and in the very year of his daughter's marriage (1515) he was called to Pisa to reform the University, which had rebelled against Florentine rule.

Having won so eligible a bride for his son, old

Salvi Borgherini set himself to prepare a bridal chamber which should be worthy of her; and the very best art which Florence could afford was called forth to decorate this shrine for the love of his son.

Baccio d'Agnolo again took chisel in hand, and blocks of dark walnut wood were transformed by magic into the most exquisite furniture. Angels and loves disported themselves amidst the rich foliage on the great bedstead, and on the cabinets and "cassoni" (chests) which were to contain the wedding finery. The backs of the chairs and the long settees, called in those days "spalliere," were richly carved and inlaid with painted panels. The bedstead and *cassoni*, and even the walls, had similar panels; but what precious panels they were! Andrea del Sarto painted those for the walls. Granacci did the ones for the head and foot of the bedstead. Pontormo decorated the sides of a large cassa. Bachiacca (Francesco d'Ubertino) painted a long settee. And on all these things the same story was told in many scenes—that pathetic and wondrous story of Joseph. Andrea's finely painted pictures tell the tale of the Patriarch's childhood and his being sold into Egypt; Granacci's bedstead gives his serving of Potiphar and prison life; while Pontormo

carries on the story of his greatness as Lord of Egypt, and Bachiacca's "spalliere" shows his brethren bowing down to him in Egypt.

The design of the whole was harmonious and exquisitely carried out, every part being a gem of art.

The bridal bower being ready, the marriage took place on July 15, 1515, and though we have no special account of it, yet from the descriptions of other Florentine weddings we can imagine the scene. A curious old painting in the Uffizi shows how the wedding guests were received under awnings in the street at the marriage of Boccaccio Adimari with Luisa Ricasoli in June, 1420. Sacchetti also speaks of this custom of guests assembling in the street; so Margherita's wedding guests probably met on the banks of the Arno till the feast was ready. Here would be seen burghers in red luccos, knights in spurs and embroidered doublets, military officials in buff, ladies in stiff brocades and pearls, with priests and doctors in black to tone down the mass of colour. Inside the house the feast is prepared in the great central hall, and here the guests are supplied with course after course of viands, and drink the bride's health in the wine from the Borgherini *poderi*.

Poets abound in Florence at this time, and sonnets and odes are freely interspersed between the courses.

In the kitchen there has been of course great stress of business for many a day. The larders are not large enough to hold the wedding gifts which take the form of eatables. Strange cooks have been at work making confections and marvellous pasties which take all kinds of artistic forms, for in those days design was not confined to the painters and sculptors; the very pastrycooks modelled statues in sugar, and temples in pie-crust, while sausages and cheese were materials for comic scenes. Barrels of wine have arrived from the country villas of the spouses; and in the kitchen are huge fires, with revolving wheels, on which scores of fat ortolans, dozens of pigeons and fowls, roast all together, spitted in rows.

At the almost contemporaneous wedding of Gualtieri Panciatichi and Nicolà Guicciardini in May, 1507, we may gather some knowledge of marriage customs and presents, &c.

We find that besides 11 calves, 2 sheep, 31 couples of fowls and turkeys, and 63 cheeses—all given as presents—there were purchased for the marriage feast 180 pairs of ortolans, 113 pairs of pigeons, 181 couples

of poultry, 94 brace of quails, and 7 peacocks, besides 78 barrels of ordinary wine and 140 flasks of Trebbiano.[1] No wonder the larders and kitchens and the halls of the old palaces were large when the owners had to prepare such feasts as these!

Margherita had a full appreciation of the artistic beauties of her bridal home, and preserved them with all her housewifely care till the troublous time of the siege, when she had to defend them almost with her life. By that time she had been married fourteen years, and sons and daughters were growing up around her. During the siege in 1529 Pier Francesco was away on some civic business at Lucca, so Margherita had to fight for her household gods alone; and bravely she did so.

The King of France (Francis I.) carried his patronage of Italian art so far that he became to cinque-cento Italy what Napoleon was early in the nineteenth century—the despoiler.

His agent in Florence was a certain Giovan-Battista della Palla, who thought to curry favour with a great power by laying his hands on many a precious work of art to send to Paris. He had long cast his eyes on

[1] From "La Famiglia Panciatichi," by Conte L. Passerini.

Margherita's chamber, and coveted its unique furniture to adorn a room at Versailles—which he promised King Francis should surpass every room in the world; and he so worked on the Signoria as to obtain their consent to purchase the Borgherini treasures, and present them to Francis I. as a gift from the Signoria of Florence. Armed with this permission, Giovan-Battista della Palla went forthwith to the house in Borgo S. Apostoli with his proposals. But Margherita was equal to the occasion; her loyalty did not feel called upon to adorn her enemies' palaces, even at the command of the Signoria.

"You are a bold man, Messer Giovan-Battista," she said, "vile broker that you are, to despoil the rooms of gentlemen, and to rob the city of its richest and most revered treasures to beautify the land of strangers and our enemies. I do not wonder at you, low man and traitor as you are, but at the magistrates of this city who allow you to act so vilely. This furniture that you covet to make money out of was my marriage gift from Salvi, my father-in-law, and I revere it for his memory, and my love for his son, and with my life and blood, if need be, I will defend it.

"Leave this house with your villainies, Giovan-

Battista, and go to those who sent you and say that I will not have a single thing moved, and if they want to make presents to King Francis let them despoil their own houses—and—never dare you to enter this door again."

Della Palla was so intimidated by this burst of native eloquence that he retired; and the Borgherini treasures remained in the hands of their rightful possessors. Margherita's descendants were not equally reverent towards their *penates*, for the beautiful things are now scattered far and wide. Two of Andrea del Sarto's panels and two of Pontormo's are in the Florentine Galleries, for Niccolo Borgherini — Margherita's grandson—sold them to the Grand Duke Francesco in 1584. For those of Andrea he was paid 360 ducats, and for Pontormo's 90 ducats. Nothing remains of the bride's home but the carvings of Baccio d'Agnolo over the doors, and the chimney-piece of Rovezzano, which is still in its place in the old house, now Palazzo del Turco in Borgo S. Apostoli.

It is believed that a beautiful Madonna which Andrea del Sarto painted for a member of the same family—Giovanni Borgherini—is now in the possession of Major Oliver Day Stokes, of Cheltenham.

Vasari describes it as "a Madonna, with a St. John giving a ball, emblematizing the world, to the infant Christ, and a fine head of St. Joseph." Sig. Milanesi, the annotator of Vasari, says he saw the painting in a private house in Florence, where it was offered for sale in 1852.

Two panels of the story of Joseph are in the collection of Earl Cowper at Panshanger; but these are more probably the ones painted by Andrea and Pontormo for the monks of S. Gallo, and not connected with the Borgherini series.

CHAPTER VI.

A Recovered Fresco.

ABOUT a mile west of Florence is an olive-covered hill, crowned with cypresses, beneath whose shadow stands all that remains of the ancient convent of Mont Oliveto. Invalided soldiers now occupy the cells ; the cypress avenue is closed and grass grown ; the refectory, divided into several rooms, now forms the house of the one *frate* who does duty in the church. To the artistic taste of this monk, Don Alfonso Focacci, Florence owes the re-discovery of a treasure, mutilated it is true, but a treasure even in its decay—the remains of a frescoed "Cenacolo" once adorning the refectory. Some two years ago, the priest by chance knocked a

bit of yellow stencilled plaster off his wall, and finding traces of colour beneath, he carefully uncovered the whole length, and half the cenacolo came to light, the one end being irretrievably lost, as the wall itself has been cut away. The figures on this side were much ruined, but the central portion remains entire. Even here the destroyer's hand has done irreparable damage: the heads of our Saviour and St. John are almost featureless, but those of St. Peter and Judas are in better preservation, and are characteristic enough to prove the authorship as that of Gian Antonio de Bazzi, known as Sodoma.

Signore Milanesi and the Commission of Art have arrived at this conclusion chiefly from internal evidence, but this to those who know Bazzi's works is overwhelming. The dark, sinister face of Judas, so passionate and rich in colouring, is almost a reproduction of some figures of Goths in the St. Benedict frescoes at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, near Siena, and reveals the same technical treatment of hair and flesh tints as the Christ of the Belle Arti at Siena.

The colouring too, has all Bazzi's own daring. St. Peter's drapery is a masterly combination of the three primaries, only possible to an artist under the influence

of the Venetian school; the Christ is in purple and blue. The artist's realistic tendency comes out in his conception of Judas: the face is sinister, keen, and covetous, but is turned away from the gaze of his Master; his worldly character is emphasized by the secular style of dress, quite unlike the religious drapery of the other apostles; the purse hanging on his hand, and even the less decorous attitude, distinguish him from the saintly figures around. Another little bit of realism is the salt-cellar overturned, evidently by the hand of Judas.

So much for internal evidence. Direct documentary proofs are unfortunately wanting, for Signore Milanesi has searched the archives of the order, but finds that the books of the "cellaria" or general expenses are missing, and the building or decorative payments are not entered in the household books of the convent. The points which would go far to prove the probability of Bazzi being the artist are the following. The head of the Olivetan Order at that time was a Fra Domenico da Lecco—who had known Bazzi in Lombardy, and employed him not only at the great convent Monte Oliveto Maggiore, but also at a smaller one called St. Anna, in Creta, near Pienza, where he

painted the refectory. It is therefore very probable that the same artist who had given satisfaction in two convents of the order, should have been employed at the third—Monte Oliveto at Florence. That he was in the city is certain, as a document proves him to have been ill in the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence in 1527, when he occupied bed No. 42.[1] No artist has suffered more at the hands of an envious biographer than Bazzi in those of Vasari, who has not even deigned to give him his right name, calling him Razzi, of which cognomen not the smallest proof remains. It is time that some justice should be done to a man whose works are so deserving of fame. The question of his birth, as I have said elsewhere,[2] may be considered settled. Padre Luigi Bruzzi finds, in the archives of Vercelli, that in 1477 a son, Giovan Antonio, was born to Jacopo d' Antonio de' Bazzi and Angelina da Bergamo his wife; and that on Nov. 28, 1490, this boy was placed as a scholar in the *bottega* of Martino Spanzotti, a painter of Casale, near Vercelli. In 1497, his father being dead, he went for some years to Lombardy, and finally in 1501 arrived

[1] Milanesi "Commentario sul Vasari," vol. vi. p. 4.
[2] "Renaissance of Art in Italy," p. 291.

in Siena, with which city his name is indissolubly connected. As proof of his stay in Lombardy, we have the patronage of Fra Domenico da Lecco, who had known him there and employed him in Siena; and the fact that he was induced to go to Siena by the Spannocchi family, who had a bank in Lombardy. Thus the varied influences apparent in his painting are accounted for. Formed in the school and land of Titian, his colouring has all the Venetian daring and richness; his flesh tints are warm, and have an Eastern glow such as Giorgione gives to his canvasses. Taken successively from thence to Lombardy and Tuscany, he grafts on this colouring a delicacy of design equal to Leonardo da Vinci and Luini, with a grace of drapery clearly Raphaelesque.

As evidence that his surname was Bazzi and not Razzi, his receipt for the *dote* of his wife, Beatrice dei Galli, is signed Johannes Antonius Jacobi de Bazis, Oct. 28, 1510; and another document securing to him the possession of a house he had bought in Terza Camollia, in the parish of S. Donati, Siena, gives his name and titles as follows—Magnifico et generoso equiti domino Joanni Antonio Jacobi de Bazis, pictori de Verzè alias el Sogdoma.

Vasari says he was despised by all, and a penniless spendthrift, and that his wife had to leave him and support herself. If this be true, what means the "*equiti domino*" above, how comes it that several letters pass, in 1537 (see Gaye's "Carteggio," vol. ii. pp. 265–268), between the Signoria of Siena and the Prince of Piombino, the first of whom wants him back in Siena, and the second detains him at his palace? In these he is spoken of with respect as Cavalier Sodoma, and there is, further, a letter addressed to himself by the Signoria, which begins "Generoso Cavaliere," and urges him to return and finish the frescoes in the chapel of the Piazza. As to his wife not being able to live with him, she was certainly with him in 1531 and 1541; and so far from being a spendthrift, he bought a second house in 1534, and gave a good *dote* to his daughter, who married one of his scholars, Bartolommeo Riccio.

Bizzarre he might have been, with his talking raven and collection of undomestic animals; but so also were Paolo Uccelli and Pier di Cosimo before him. His running races in the Palio might have seemed to his biographer unworthy the dignity of a serious artist; but his contemporary Albertinelli has kept his

fame undimmed, though given to the same kind of exercises.

Let Bazzi be judged as an artist by the evidence of his works, and not a line or an expression will be found unworthy of the highest art.

He understood woman's feelings in all their purity, as witness the exaltation of soul in the "Ecstasy of St. Catherine," and the tenderness of feeling in the "Salutation" in the Oratory of San Bernardino, where he gives a new interpretation to the greeting. The mother of St. John falls on her knees before the Virgin, as if recognizing the greater honour of her coming maternity. In the "Nativity," once at Lecceto, now in the Belle Arti, Siena, the expression of religious joy and adoration is even more exalted than in Correggio's well-known and similar rendering of the subject.

One of Bazzi's greatest distinctions is his love of truth. His Holy Families are not as those of many artists, idealized portraits of contemporaries; they are by him represented as they were in reality—an Eastern household;—the rich complexioned Orientals in the "Nativity" in the church of St. Agostino, and the figures beneath the exquisite "Coronation" in St. Bernardino, are specimens of this. The modelling of

the Adam and St. Joseph in the latter is splendid; the flesh tints are Sodoma's very own—warm, living, and Eastern. In contrast to these, the spirituality of the upper portion of this painting comes out with double refinement. The Virgin, a lovely modest figure in graceful white robes, kneels among the clouds, while Christ crowns her, and angels and cherubim hover adoring around.

But Bazzi's greatest masterpieces are his conceptions of Christ. In his "Saviour on the Mount of Olives" —now in the Belle Arti, Siena—the figure of the kneeling Christ is replete with the majesty of the King of Sorrows; so noble is the form that even the angel loses dignity beside it. In the "Christ in Hades" the attribute is triumphant power; but the grandest inspiration of all is the fragment from the "Flagellation," consisting of the one figure of the Saviour. If Sodoma had never painted anything but this broken fragment, he would still have been famous for ever. What the whole fresco must have been we have no means of judging. No doubt the figures whose upraised arms are visible with their scourges were coarse men suitable to their office, and one feels thankful they have disappeared, leaving the Man of

Sorrows alone in his overwhelming grief. There is that in the face, which no Christian can look on unmoved. The "St. Catherine" series in S. Domenico, and the St. Sebastian now in the Uffizi, Florence, both prove how well he understood the refining power of faith; while his largest works, the "St. Benedict" series at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, show his concentration, power of grouping, and graphic manner of telling a story. Any one who has not seen these, has yet to become acquainted with a great painter. All his technical excellences are to be studied here — his robust daring colouring, harmony of composition, vivid life and expression, and his faithfulness to truth in nature. His Goths are fierce barbarians, his saints spiritual beings; and if only the fresco of which we give an illustration were as well preserved, the same signs would be found, as the head of St. Peter and figure of Judas testify. We have in Bazzi not the slave of an ideal conventionality as was Perugino, not the exquisite adaptor of contemporaneous life to Scripture stories as Andrea del Sarto; but one who is able to grasp and show forth the varied truths of both nature and spirit—giving the spirituality of the saint and the materiality of the sinner with equal fidelity.

CHAPTER VII.

A Museum of Pictorial Tapestry.

FLORENCE has added another page to the history of Art which she contains within her walls, by the Museum of Tapestry and Needlework recently opened in the upper floor of the Palazzo della Crocetta, the site of the Etruscan and Egyptian Museums.

Tapestry weaving was one of the distinctive arts of Florence at that time when the busy fingers and refined taste of her citizens evolved artistic forms out of every material they touched, be it marble or canvas, stone or silk, wood or precious stones. Like most of the arts of the Renaissance, this also was brought

from the East at the time of the Crusades, took root in France and Germany, and reached its culmination in Italy. The story may be briefly traced in its successive names, Sarazinois, Arras, and Tapestry. The earlier English and French tapestries, such as the *vela depicta* of Dagobert in the church of St. Denis in the sixth century, the Auxerre embroidered hangings in 840, and the Bayeux tapestry of Matilda, do

SONG OF SOLOMON, FLEMISH TAPESTRY.

not enter into this history, as they were not woven but worked with a needle, as were also the Byzantine ones. The Flemish factories began in the twelfth century, and those of Arras in Picardy flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth.

The fifteenth century was a great period of emigration for Flemish artists and artizans. Probably they were driven abroad by religious or political persecu-

tions, but it is a fact, that about the same time that the workmen of Johann Faust were establishing printing presses all over Italy, Flemish tapestry weavers were also setting up looms in her principal cities. The Gonzaghi employed them at Mantua in 1419, the Venetians in 1421; other Flemings settled in Siena and Bologna. Not till 1455 did Pope Nicholas encourage them in Rome, and a certain Livino de' Gilii came to Florence about the same time, to be succeeded towards the end of the century by Johann, son of Johann. The curious old frieze of tapestry, illustrating the Song of Solomon, of which we give a specimen, might have been the work of one of these early weavers, and the Baptism of Christ (No. 66, Museo degli Arazzi) a slightly later one. Of the same style were probably the "Spalliera da cassa," spoken of in the Inventory of Lorenzo de' Medici, of which one represented a chase and another a tournament.

But the chief treasures of the new museum were made after the time of Cosimo I., who, in 1545, engaged several Flemish weavers, and established a school in Florence. The documents still exist[1] which set forth the agreement between Pier Francesco

[1] Archivio di Stato. Fascio G. 299.

Riccio, as major-domo of Duke Cosimo, and the two principal manufacturers, Johann Roost and Nicolo Karcher, both of whom had previously worked in Ferrara. The contract with Johann Roost, dated September 3, 1548, obliges him to keep twenty-four looms, and as many more as needful, at work; to teach the art of weaving arras, of dyeing wool and silk, and spinning wool, silk, and gold, &c., to any Florentine youths who should be placed under his instruction—the instruction to be gratis, but the pupils to keep themselves. The Duke engages to furnish looms and necessaries, and to pay Roost the annual salary of five hundred scudi in gold.

The contract with Karcher, November 17, 1550, is precisely similar in tenor, but he is only obliged to keep eighteen looms, and receives a salary of two hundred scudi. Both these documents are renewals of old contracts made three or four years previously, and rendered necessary by the increased press of business, and greater number of pupils.

It was not likely that the Italians would for long accept Flemish Art in their tapestries. No! They only took from the foreigners the mere handicraft, and impressed it with their own artistic taste. Before

long, all the chief artists of the Academy of St. Luke became designers for the weavers of Arazzi. Vasari's friend, Salviati, gave the cartoons for the "Deposition from the Cross" (Museum, No. 111), which was woven by Roost in 1552, and for "Ecce Homo," and a "Resurrection" by Karcher, in 1553.

The work seems to have been distributed pretty equally between the two factories. Of twenty pieces of tapestry representing the history of Joseph, and woven between 1547 and 1550, nine were executed in the looms of Roost, and eleven by those of Karcher; while of Bachiacca's four cartoons of the Months, three of them were woven by Roost and one by Karcher, who at the same time made another hanging, of grotesque subjects, from a cartoon by the same master. The very pictorial and allegorical style thrown into the tapestry by the Italian artists may be seen in their painting of the Months (December, January, and February), with the border, which is a mixture of mythology, grotesqueness, and classicality. Roost's signature was very curious; the Italians having named him Rosto (roast), he took as his anagram a piece of meat on the spit. Karcher's sign was a monogram. About the year 1553 Roost was at work on the fine

pieces, "Justice liberating Innocence," and "Flora" (Museum, Nos. 122, 123). The two episodes in the life of Cæsar (Nos. 88 and 89) were of about the same date, but came from the factory at Bologna, whence Cosimo purchased them. They show a more German style in design.

Besides improving the artistic value of Flemish arras, the Italians rendered it also richer and more gorgeous in material. The Flemish work was entirely in wool and thread, the Venetian and Florentine hangings are rich in glowing tints of silk and gleams of gold thread. The style used by all the masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the *haute lisse*, or "high warp," in which the frame, with its horizontal threads, was placed upright, and the pattern so far behind it that the weaver could walk round and examine his work from the back. In *basse lisse* the frame lies close on the pattern, and is woven entirely on the face of the work. The method in either case is similar, the alternate horizontal threads are lifted with the treadle, and so much of it is woven with one colour, as the pattern indicates. A kind of comb is used to press the perpendicular threads together, and all the holes which occur at the junction of

two colours horizontally are sewn together afterwards.

Karcher ceased to work in 1553, and Roost was buried in San Lorenzo in 1563, after which we hear of no more Flemings. The youths they had been obliged to train became masters in their stead, Benedetto Squilli taking the factory in Via dei Servi, and Giovanni Sconditi that in Via del Cocomero. A little later Guaspari Papini united the two, and in his turn engaged artists to draw his cartoons.

Alessandro Allori gave the designs for Nos. 26, 28, and 33 in the new museum, representing scenes from the life of Christ, and also for the six magnificent pieces of the "Story of Phaeton," woven by Papini between the years 1587 and 1621. Cigoli supplied those for the "Christ before Herod" and others, while Bernardino Poccetti was constantly employed by the firm.

The Florentine manufactory declined a little during the reigns of Ferdinand I. and Cosimo II., while that of France, which had revived by its influence, made immense progress. Just as the Italians imported the technical art from Flanders, the French imported their artistic beauty from Italy. Primaticcio was employed

to draw cartoons for the weavers of Francis I.; nor did Raphael himself disdain to draw for them, as the cartoons at Hampton Court testify; Giulio Romano was also employed: and Henri IV., in 1597, invited to France not only artists, but weavers in silk and gold. To this Italian influence we may date the rise of the Gobelins, which so far outvied the mother fabric that Ferdinand II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, sought to revive the Florentine manufactory by employing a Parisian named Pierre Fevère, to whom a great number of the tapestries in the new museum are owing, the most original of which are the allegorical pieces of Day, Night, Winter, and Summer.

I do not know whether it was from motives of economy, or from the difficulty of finding good artists in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Art was low in Florence, but Fevère seems to have worked more from copies of the older masters than from original cartoons. Thus we find tapestries of his from Michael Angelo, Del Sarto, Cigoli, and other artists. He did not even disdain to copy an old tapestry of Karcher's, the "Month of May." To Fevère and Papini, clever as they were, may probably be dated the decline of tapestry as arras proper.

They so imitated oil-paintings, that their tapestries were framed and used as paintings would have been—the old office of clothing the walls was superseded; in ceasing to be a branch of decorative art, and aiming at pictorial effect, tapestry fell.

After Fevère, Giovan Battista Termini became the director of the Florentine factory: but he lived in stormy times; the workmen split into factions, one side advocating the *haute lisse*, the other the *basse lisse*. He, however, would not hear of the latter innovation, and was so persecuted that he had to fly from Florence. His successor, Antonio Bronconi, had some good workmen under him, but their tapestries are all ruined by the affectations and bad drawing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as witness the "Four Quarters of the Globe" and the "Four Elements," in the museum.

In 1737 the manufacture in Florence was finally closed, after a career of nearly three hundred years. Besides the visible history of her own progress in the art, Florence enshrines in her museum some of the finest works from the Gobelins, such as the series of "Scenes from the life of Esther," those delightful pieces of "Children Gardening," and a very fine series,

"Adam and Eve," from a Flemish manufactory. These latter have become historically interesting to modern work-a-day Florence, as having been for centuries connected with the bygone days of *feste*. They were always hung in the Loggia dei Lanzi on St. John's Day and the *fête* of Corpus Domini, while other series of Samson and St. John Baptist adorned the façade of the Palazzo Vecchio.

There are several rooms in the museum set apart for antique needlework and old brocades and costumes.

PART II.

TUSCAN SKETCHES.

CHAPTER I.

The Vintage.

A STRANGE fancy has taken the Countess Benveduti this year. She has as many villas scattered through the rich valley of the Arno as she can count on the fingers of her white hands—villas large and comfortable, villas artistic and beautiful; but this year nothing will please her but to hold her great vintage party in the very oldest and most dilapidated of them all.

The Villa Vecchia Benveduti—as it is called to distinguish it from the more modern heritages of the family—stands up like a great fortress, with its solid walls of Tuscan architecture and swallow-tail battle-

ITALIAN VINES.

ments, on a hill overlooking the southern part of the Val d'Arno, where Florence shines, a heap of palaces and towers on a silver stream. Although no Benveduti has lived in the Villa Vecchia for a hundred years or more, a long line of their ancestors had made it a home for centuries before that; and time has been kind to it, for the ancient furniture of carved wood is still solid, and the rich brocaded silk hangings still cover the walls, with their colours softened by the sunny years as they have passed.

The aroma of the eighteenth century lingers yet about the rooms, where curious old backgammon boards, and ancient cards in painted boxes are on the gilded tables of the Sala, and the portraits on the walls show wigs and embroidered coats; and where "peruke stands" stretch out empty arms beside the blurred mirrors in carved frames on the dressing-tables, and the heavy canopied bedstead holds its sway in majestic gloom in the chambers. The wigs are worn in a different guise now, and are not so easily hung on a stand at night.

But to return to the Countess's "Vendemmia." There are wide vineyards sloping down the hills and covering the terraces round the Villa Vecchia with

gracious festoons of vivid leafage, between the dim and dusky olives. Beneath the olives and fruit-bowed peach trees, wave the wide green blades of the maize with its rows of purplish feathers. The podere is a rich one, and has always been famed for its "*vin-santo.*" Of course it would give the Countess a great deal less trouble to have her party at one of her more modern villas, where everything is in readiness to receive visitors; but she is a lady who delights in a new sensation of any sort, and when she has taken a fancy into her head, does not mind giving any amount of trouble to gratify it. A vintage party pre-supposes a dinner and a supper. The kitchens at the Villa Vecchia are large and cavernous enough to cook for a hundred guests, and the banqueting-hall has room to seat them; but in the one place, the frying-pans and gridirons have the rust of ages encrusted on them, and the oaken cabinets of the other only contain a few grand old majolica plates and dishes, very fine but not convenient. So for nearly a week past, red-wheeled *barrocci*—the framework which in Tuscany does duty for a cart—and more cumbrous ox-waggons have been toiling up the hill laden with culinary utensils and table furniture.

To-day the winding road from the valley shows different travellers : a succession of family equipages with solemn horses and grave coachmen, of open cabs full of English or French faces, of more modest *baghere*—little chaises drawn by the fleet Tuscan ponies which, though famous for speed, are totally devoid of paces. These latter vehicles bring up stout "fattori" (bailiffs) from the other villas, with their portly wives, whose white bodices are relieved by a wealth of jewellery about them. Long coral necklaces hang on their bosoms, tight-fitting rows of pearls shine round their brown necks, long gaudy earrings quiver in their ears, and rings reach to the middle joints of their fingers. Their daughters are smaller editions of the mothers, with cheeks as rosy as their corals, and eyes as bright as diamonds. They wear their glossy hair piled in coils round their neat heads, and veiled beneath a most becoming mantilla.

The varied company arrive ; are set down on the great grassy terrace, bordered with a low wall with dilapidated statues on it, which does duty for a lawn ; and here the Countess receives them, giving her hand and cheek equally to the aristocratic visitors and the

buxom *fattoresse.* The former touch each cheek in a salute; the latter either do the same, or, with more humility, bend and kiss her hand.

The Contessine Amalia and Irene, daughters of the hostess, in broad-brimmed Tuscan hats looped up with roses, and white dresses very much flounced, look like the nymphs on a "Ginori" vase, with the pleasing addition of lively manners and bright eyes.

"Now, you know, you have all come to work," laughs the Contessina Amalia to a group of English girls who are sitting on the low wall gazing their fill at the Val d'Arno spread out below them, covered only with the filmy veil of noonday heat.

"Oh yes! we are quite ready—only tell us where to go and what to do," exclaims one fair girl.

"I begin to feel quite classical already at the very sight of those contadini with their antique pails of grapes on their shoulders, it is like one of the idylls of Horace!" exclaims a young lady in spectacles and short hair, whom it is whispered is a Girton B.A.

"They look as if they had stepped bodily out of Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco of Noah and his family," says a third who is an art student.

"First of all, you must call those modern pails

bigonce," smiles Contessina Amalia; "and next you must be supplied with basket and scissors, for I see you have not come provided."

"The result of English ignorance, you see," says the Girton girl.

"Next," went on Amalia, "a cavalier will be necessary."

On this the English eyes open wide—"A cavalier?"

"Yes—who is to hold your basket, and run and empty it when full, and pick the grapes above your head and talk to you, and——"

"In fact, do all the work, or help you to play," interrupts the sensible fair girl. "I and the cavalier would find each other bores in a quarter of an hour."

At this moment Contessina Irene appears from the huge door of the house with a number of pairs of scissors, each hung on red braid, and half a dozen dainty little baskets. The daughter of the *fattoressa* follows with a pile of baskets of more solid and useful form. The sensible English girl immediately seizes the largest of these, and possessing herself of a pair of scissors, which she hangs round her waist, marches off energetically to work without waiting the third of the necessary adjuncts.

"Signor Mazzadura," exclaims the Contessina Amalia, "will you initiate the Signorina Ellison into the mysteries of grape-gathering. You can at the same time study the mysteries of the English language and character," she added *sotto voce*, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

Introductions follow briskly, much as in a ball-room, only instead of the stereotyped "May I have the pleasure," &c., the cavalier begs the honour of carrying the ladies' baskets. Some girls go off in groups by themselves, the matrons following in pairs; the paterfamilias generally declines to work in the sun, and lights a cigar in a cool arbour or under a shady *pergola*, where he talks politics or finance with his compeers.

"Don't introduce me to any of your *forestieri*," whispers a handsome young man to Amalia. "I have reserved for myself the hope of carrying your basket for you."

"If you promise not to make me idle, you may do so," she smiles; and they too disappear leisurely after the rest, leaving me alone on the terrace, studying the Italian vineyard in its midday aspect from beneath the shade of a huge, thick-lined parasol.

FRENCH SYSTEM OF VINE GROWING.

The vineyard beneath me stretches out in all its luxuriant width and breadth; there the vine garlands wreath and festoon from apple tree to maple, and wed the olive to the mulberry, for this is one of the old-fashioned *poderi*, where the straight, low espaliers of the French viniculture have not yet intruded to do away with the careless beauty of the classic vineyard. Every garland is rich with white or purple clusters; they nestle up in the highest branches, and trail down the tree trunks to the cracked and parched ground.

Here and there are fields of maize, the wide green blades of which have been stripped off to feed the cattle in the grassless summer months, and the ruddy bunches of corn have ripened in their yellow leafy husks. But not many of these swelling bundles are left in the ground now, for there are rich-coloured piles of Indian corn heaped up on the *aja* just below me, and the peasant children are rolling about in them as a little diversion from their appointed task of stripping them of their husks.

The *aja* or threshing-floor has arched sheds round it, which are filled with red-shafted carts, oil-jars like those in which Ali Baba's thieves were hidden, piles of unwashed wine-barrels tapering at both ends like

the old Roman ones which held Horace's *falernian* wine, and a primitive plough or two lying useless and waiting for rain to soften the ground.

What would English labourers say to the Italian plough! It is just a piece of the trunk or root of a tree, with a sharp spur or branch on one side which answers the purpose of a plough-share.

On the low wall of the *aja* a row of wicker-work hurdles are lying, with a quantity of figs cut open and spread to dry in the sun. Then a succession of brown earthern pans, where a dark red mixture is drying—this is the tomato preserve to flavour the soups and macaroni in the winter.

The *aja*, always the centre of farm work, is especially full and busy to-day. An ox-cart has just come up with a large tub, or *tino*, on it, and in the *tino* a man red to his knees with the blood of the wounded grapes, which he is treading underfoot, and crushes, as the white oxen drag the cart slowly up the hill, their meek heads swaying beneath the yoke, and looking at all who meet them with large pathetic eyes. There is in the eyes of these animals an expression of depth and mystery which recalls to one's mind all the ancient myths, how they lent their form to the gods, and one

thinks instructively of Io flying to her Egyptian home. The divinity of Isis and Astarte still lingers in the eyes and horns of these speechless creatures whose heads are bowed to labour.

The oxen push the cart, with its frothing load of bruised grapes, back into an archway beneath the terrace on which I stand, and soon I see nothing but two white heads, with crimson tassels across the foreheads, framed in the blackness of a foreshortened arch.

Down in the *podere*, merry groups of workers are gleaming in the brilliant sunshine. Men in wide hats, bare feet and coloured shirt-sleeves, carry the tall wooden pails called *bigonce*, filled with grapes, to the large tubs or *tini* on the ox-waggons in the grassy road. Groups of girls, in gay-tinted skirts and particoloured bodices, cut off the clusters from the festooning vines to fill their baskets, which they empty into the nearest *bigoncia*. The children fill tiny baskets, and toddle across the rough ground to empty them; but their bunches are very much mutilated, for it is a part of the ceremony to eat all the time. A sturdy young monkey of a boy, with bare legs, has given himself up entirely to this enjoyment, for he is lying full length

under a huge bunch of purple grapes, letting them drop one by one into his mouth.

And the background to all this classic rusticity! The picturesque profile of a hill rounding off to the left, with a convent on its summit, a row of cypresses marking its undulating form as it sinks into the valley. Those cypresses stand up darkly against the far-off hills of Monte Morello and Monte Murlo behind—hills of rounded but rugged forms, softened into beauty by tender blue mists in gradating shades. On the right, the white villas which stud the whole landscape seem to gather into a focus round a great dome, just as crystals combine round a nucleus, and the crowded crystals shoot up into spires and beautiful towers in the midst. This is Florence, and all around her are miles of dusky olives, relieved with dark pines and green trees, and softened off into undulating hills.

Shouts of laughter and snatches of song reach me from below, for vintage is a merry time, and the peasants carol their *stornelli* gaily as they gather in the ruby harvest. More refined voices sound nearer me, but none of the amateur grape gatherers are to be seen. Where are they all? We must find them.

Immediately below the house is a long *pergola*, or trellis walk, covered with vines ; smaller shady arbours, equally rich in fruit, branch off from it. It is here that the guests are assembled, for the real labour in the sun is left to the peasants, and the guests only do a little work in the coolest spots, and the work is as ornamental as their baskets.

The Contessa Clementina de' Barbeneri has filled her elegant receptacle, and whiles away the time till some one comes to relieve her of it, by lounging on a garden seat and eating the contents—a convenient way of lightening her burden. The English girls awake the amazement of their southern companions by really working. The energy with which they snip off the bunches, springing or climbing to reach them, is to the lovers of ease most astonishing. They decline troubling the gentlemen to carry their baskets, but run to and fro and empty them into the tall *bigonce*, placed at each end of the *pergola*.

The Contessina Amalia has found a more diverting occupation. Her handsome friend has climbed up the trellis, and drops the purple bunches into her outspread hands beneath. Her uplifted face seems especially interesting to him, and if the grapes drop

through her fingers now and then it is not to be wondered at. However, not a great deal of flirting can be done, for there are mothers, and aunts, and duennas at all points, as an Italian girl is never beyond strict surveillance.

A little while later a footman announces that luncheon is on the table, and the grape gatherers are only too happy to move, with a flutter of fans, across the sunny lawn to the shady *loggia* on the west, for lunch is to be *al-fresco*.

The great *salone*, with its peeling frescoes and cold marble statues, is too sepulchral; so my lady has chosen to set her tables under an arched cloister, where a frescoed roof keeps off the midday heat, and the carved pillars, wreathed with greenery, admit a soft breeze from the cool shrubbery. The meal is not like an English luncheon; there is no display of fruit and flowers, creams and jellies, to feast the eyes during the earlier courses, but in their stead are old Majolica dishes and ancient salt-cellars. The viands are handed round cut up, one dish at a time, till ten or twelve courses have been served. They begin with *ante-pasta*, which in this case consists of *salame* (Bologna sausage) and fresh figs, a favourite mixture amongst

Italians. Then comes the soup, next the *bouilli.* After that a fry, made of various animal and vegetable substances, including melon flowers. Next appears the roast, which, in honour of the English, is called "rosbiffe," and consists of beef stewed in wine to make it more luscious. Then the *umido*, or stew, a tongue dressed *agro dolce* (acid sweet), *i.e.*, in a sauce consisting of chocolate, currants, pine nuts, lemon, or vinegar, &c., &c., and, believe it who will, a very tasty dish. Then follow the vegetable course, the sweets, the fruit, and lastly the black coffee. At a vintage dinner, however, there is a ceremony which is not to be omitted—the guests must taste every kind of wine made on the *podere.*

There is *vino rosso*, made from the ordinary red grapes; *vino stretto*, the first fermentation drawn off before the "must" is put in; and *vino bianco*, from grapes without fermenting the skins — these have different names according to the *podere* on which they are grown. Then there are *vin santo*, a white muscatel wine made from white grapes partly sun-dried; and Aleatico, a rich red wine, like new and heavy port, made from black grapes of a peculiar flavour.

This year the peculiar feature is a new beverage

called Isabella wine, an inspiration of Count Benvenuti to turn to account the Uva Isabella, or strawberry grapes, an American variety lately introduced.

As each wine has to be tasted and commented upon with compliments to the makers, it may be imagined that the meal takes some time,—so long, that the sun has sunk low enough to admit of walking in the more open parts of the ground, when the guests rise from table. Some of us lounge about on the terrace, others set off in parties down the slope to where the *contadini* are at work. The scene here is an idyll from Theocritus, or a lyric from Horace. A black-eyed maiden, with white sleeves and red kerchief, stands holding forth her blue apron to catch the bunches which a youth mounted on a ladder throws down to her. Barefooted girls poise their luscious loads on their heads, and tread majestically across the rugged soil to the *tino* or wooden receptacle, round which a group of brown-legged children are gathered, laughing merrily as a daring little comrade tinges his chubby hands in the red juice, and while the united strength of two fat babies wields the wooden crusher.

Three merry girls, clearing a low espalier of its grapes, sing *stornelli*, and a young man with a classic

profile responds, from the heights of a mulberry-tree, with a *rispetto.*

Curious to learn what becomes of the grapes afterwards, some of us follow the ox-cart on its next journey to the *aja*, where we see the contents of the *tino* bailed out into a large vat placed over a stand, and two men get in to crush the fruit. This process is repeated for fifteen days; then the vat is left for two days without motion, after which the first wine is drawn off. This is done by taking out the tap near the bottom of the vat, and putting in its place a bunch of heather or broom as a strainer.

This is the ordinary primitive process as still practised in the country here by all the old-fashioned *contadini.* I have no doubt Noah was as far advanced in wine making as this. When all the wine is drawn off, the "must," *i.e.*, stems and skins, &c., is put into a *strettoio*, or press, and the juice thus obtained is called *vino stretto*, and forms the second quality.

After the wine is poured into barrels, it has to be "*governato.*" Some grapes are saved, of the kinds called *colombano*, *canajolo*, or even muscatel; they are boiled and thrown into the barrels. After a certain time the wine is again strained off, put into fresh

barrels, and kept for use. Some landowners have of late years improved on this primitive method, and make their wine in the more scientific French manner, but the improvement is by no means general. To make the *vin santo*, or muscatel wine, the white moscato grapes are half dried in the sun and afterwards fermented.

Towards sundown, shouts from below announce the arrival of the last ox-waggon; a crowd of workers follow it, some swinging empty baskets, some shouldering empty *bigonce*, others bearing loads of choice bunches for the Contessa to make presents to her friends. Then the peasant women spread tables on tressles on the *aja*, and all the workers sit down to a lively meal, the Countess and her guests watching them from above. The quick circulation of straw-covered flasks of wine is so constant, that it gives a sense of motion to the scene.

No sooner is the pleasant supper over, than the strains of an accordion are heard, and the girls in great haste clear away the impromptu tables, roll the empty barrels under the arches, and sweep the yellow maize-pods into a heap in the corner, and the *aja* is forthwith transformed into a dancing-floor. Down troop the

guests from above, and the young Contessine give their hands into the clasp of red-handed *contadini*, the Florentine exquisites choose the prettiest country lasses they can find, and the dance begins. The guests soon leave off, however, and stroll in couples about the grounds till the moon rises and reminds them that the day is over.

The Countess and her daughters stand on the terrace echoing the last "Such a delightful day! Good bye," and watch the last carriage roll down the winding road to follow the others, whose lamps look like a procession of glowworms in the far-off plain. The Contessina Amalia smiles and sighs to herself as she watches a shadowy horse and his rider melt into space, tiil it become a mere rhythmic echo. She has gathered a different vintage. Love and hope have been garnered in her heart this day.

CHAPTER II.

The Festival of the Dead.

FLORENCE, *All Souls' Day, Nov. 2nd.*

FROM five o'clock in the morning the bells of the many churches of Florence have been ringing, as numberless masses for the dead are said to-day, it being the Festa di Tutti Morti.

The religious duties within the city being performed, the city turns out *en masse*, to make its yearly pilgrimage to the cemetery at San Miniato. Struck with the peculiarly jovial aspect of the crowd, and the contrast of their festal dresses to the melancholy errand on which they were supposed to be bent—to

mourn and pray over the tombs of departed relatives—we too prepare to do as Florence does, and start forthwith to see how the dead are remembered by the living, in the "city of flowers."

The bridges over the Arno are crowded by a continuous stream of people all turned towards the cypress-crowned hill on the Oltr'-Arno side, where the grand old basilica of San Miniato rises white and majestic on the summit. A motley crowd streams over the bridges and through the quaint streets. There are dark-faced Italian employés, evidently enjoying an unwonted holiday; groups of bright-eyed Florentine maidens, in ultra-fashionable dress, and the inevitable "duenna" behind them; little knots of black-robed priests with shovel hats, who walk with folded hands and severe eyes; blue-coated soldiers, or *bersaglieri*, with flying cocks' feathers. Then comes a family party from the country, a brown-faced peasant with his little boy on his shoulder, and wife at his side, gay in red or yellow kerchief, and carrying in her arms a stiff little bundle, the moving head and arms of which, protruding from the top, proclaim it a baby. Behind them a cluster of *contadini* girls in the brightest of dresses, and with all their

festal jewellery displayed — some wearing seven or eight rows of pearls round their necks, and earrings of enormous size. These jewels form their *dôte* or marriage portion, and descend from mother to daughter through many generations.

Mingling with this motley company are a few black figures, widows and mothers of the dead, carrying wreaths or crosses of immortelles, or long candles to burn on their tombs. These few dark spots on the mass of motion and colour give the key-note to the day. To them the day of the dead is a sacred feast, hallowed by love and grief, a day passed in memories of the happy time when those whom they go to mourn were walking in life and health by their side. But we cannot grieve for ever, and the new mourners are but few among the many on this bright November day. Some children are dancing merrily along with rings of everlastings in their hands inscribed "To my Brother," or "Sister mine," and they evidently think themselves favoured beyond their little friends who have no wreaths. One child just in front of us says to another, "Who is your garland for."

"For my aunt."

"Ah!" replies the first, "mine is more than that, it

A FLORENTINE FUNERAL.

is for my own mamma." And she displays in evident pride a hard yellow garland, with "Madre mia" written on it in black immortelles.

Here and there rolls by the carriage of a Contessa or Marchesa carrying her to the Requiem Mass; and walking slowly are some bare-footed Franciscan friars, and one or two members of different sisterhoods in white wimples, with rosaries in their clasped hands.

On winds the gathering stream through the narrow streets, out under the dark arches of the Porta San Miniato and up the steep hill, called the Via Crucis, which leads to the great cemetery. It is bordered at intervals with shrines of the seven stations, at each of which devout Catholics say a prayer.

This morning every shrine is crowded by beggars, who collect from all parts for this day. There are blind beggars, lame, dumb, deaf, and dwarf beggars; beggars without legs who have a peculiarly swift and original mode of locomotion; beggars begging for themselves, and some begging for other beggars.

On the summit of the Via Crucis are two churches. The smaller, the church of the Franciscan Friars, with their convent adjoining, on whose door-step may generally be seen a group of poor people bringing

their empty platters to get them filled for a meal by the monks. Higher up stands the great basilica of San Miniato, with its inlaid marble front and glittering mosaic with gold ground, which is improved from an ancient Lombard building erected by the Emperor Henry II. and his wife, Cunegonda, in 1013. To reach this we enter a dark gateway, roofed over and adorned with several large iron extinguishers. This is the ancient lych-gate where the bearers rested the bier, and the extinguishers were, and are even now, used to put out the torches of the funeral processions.

We pass out into the precincts of the cemetery and enter the great church by the Porta Santa, so called because the body of the martyr S. Miniato was discovered herein, and the dedication of Cunegonda's church was changed and took his name instead of St. Peter's. One's first impression was of a surging crowd swaying about in dangerous proximity to lighted candles, for the floor is strewn with tombstones, and on all these are wreaths and burning tapers. The crowd takes care of itself, and as nobody dreams of pushing, one's fears of conflagration wear off in time and we dare to cast our eyes around. The church is magnificent in form and design. Two rows of marble columns

support the nave and aisles; at the east end two flights of marble steps lead to the upper tribune, and a wide stairway descends to the crypt beneath, which has remains of the ancient Lombard architecture. On the tribune is a wonderful "ambone" in carved marble, with the exquisite colours of "purple antique," the most rare of ancient marbles. The dome of the tribune is covered with a fine gold-grounded mosaic of Christ with St. John, St. Matthew, and San Miniato, dating from the eleventh century; and beneath this five windows of thin slabs of Oriental alabaster, through which the light of the morning sun passes with a soft opaque radiance. The choir in the tribune is filled with priests and choristers in their carved oak stalls, and they respond in deep harmonies to the priests in gorgeous robes performing the mass for the dead at the high altar. There is a very busy little acolyte who seems to think himself, the chief performer, and on the step of the very altar kneels a poor woman, who continually crosses herself, and when the priest moves near her she takes the hem of his garment and softly kisses it. We are touched at the sight with the memory of another woman in the days when Christ was on the earth, and wonder has this poor creature come here for healing by faith too.

In the crypt or under church are many relics; the tombs of S. Miniato and other martyrs are there, and a niche in the wall contains the blood of some martyrs. In the left aisle there is a certain chapel which contains a changing crowd the whole day. Here is the tomb of Cardinal Jacopo di Portugallo, and his episcopal chair. The tomb is the work of Rossellino, and very exquisite sculpture it is; the chapel is decorated with lovely blue and white medallions by Luca della Robbia. But the general crowd does not give its attention to these masterpieces—it is entirely directed to the chair of inlaid marble, which every one who comes in kneels and kisses; some seat themselves solemnly in it for a moment, with hands in the attitude of prayer. We ask a man why this should be. He rubbed his head and shrugged his shoulders, but did not exactly know, only 'twas a holy relic. A woman was better informed, and she told us that a prayer or a kiss offered there gave the penitent so many days' indulgence, *i.e.*, so many days off the time allotted to purgatory after death. The mass is over, the organ has ceased rolling its waves of sound through the arches, the crowd in the nave gently parts asunder, and the whole mass of priests, acolytes, choristers, &c.,

THE WHITE MISERICORDIA, PREPARING FOR A FUNERAL.

bearing lighted candles, passes in procession down the steps, through the nave, and out at the Porta Santa to walk through the cemetery. Their chanting voices ring out on the clear air from the cypress-crowned hill, and mingle with the worldly sounds and the tolling of bells which come up from the city, whose towers and domes are gleaming down below across the glittering Arno. It is so old-world and artistic, that one might make a poem of it were it not so marred by the littleness of humanity mingling with all. The bare-headed priests chant and pray for peace to the souls of the dead, who lie so silent beneath the sod on all sides of them ; and the atoms of living humanity called boys go side by side with the solemn procession, fighting each other over the wax which drops from the candles as they pass by. One little bully frightens away a girl whose hand is held beneath a guttering taper, and then takes the very piece of falling wax for himself. Chief amongst them is the energetic little acolyte, who with a solemn face possesses himself of wax right and left, hides it all in the breast of his full white ephod, and folds his hands devoutly over.

The whole wide cemetery is full of people. On the inscribed slabs which form a pavement on each side

of the path are mourners kneeling and praying amid the lighted candles flickering in the wind, and the efforts to keep these alight, alternate spasmodically with the fervency of their prayers. Every grave is decorated according to the taste of the mourners, some with real flowers, exquisite but fleeting; the greater number choose a more lasting, if inartistic, form of expression, and hang up frightful bead frames or hard rings of yellow and black everlastings; some put a ghastly framed photograph; and a favourite adornment is a iron imitation flower, painted, in an iron pot. Tinted wreaths of flowers in tin are also frequent. Great variety exists also in the monuments, among which there is a good deal of sculptural art.

There is a terrace raised up over the colombaria, or graves in wall cells, and from here a marvellous view of the whole cemetery, with its surging crowd of priests and processions; vendors of cakes, sweets, and cigars; girls with mass books and rosaries in one hand, fruit in the other; weeping mourners, and jesting young men; bereaved mothers and wives bewailing for those who are hidden from them by the cruel marble slab; and light-hearted girls with all their thoughts warm for the hopes of the future love. Life

and death, and death and life, contrasted side by side in a hundred different guises.

And down below the hill of the dead, beautiful Florence, with the bridge-spanned Arno flowing amidst its towers and palaces. And that, too, speaks of death and life—a nation has died, and a new nation is growing to strength and power. And farther off are the mountains, veiled in golden mist, which seem to speak of the everlasting.

CHAPTER III.

At the Baths.

THE Italians like to take their pleasures as they do their penances, in a concentrated form. They bring a mass of social gaieties to a strong focus, surfeit themselves with balls, concerts, "Fieri," and "Corsi" for a few weeks, and call it "carnival." They crowd all the penances and fastings and sermons into the Lenten season, and then take no more thought till next year.

On the same principle, ladies receive all their calls on one day of the week, and live in homely solitude in their *peignoirs* for the next six days.

Sea-bathing subjected to a like process becomes compressed into the short space of two months, when

ITALIAN BATHS.

as many ephemeral dissipations as possible are crowded together on the seashore. Not an Italian who can afford his yearly sojourn at the baths, even if it be only a fortnight, will miss it; but not one would dream of taking it in June or September, when he might obtain greater benefit at half the expense. No! To the Tuscan mind Neptune's temple is only open for a limited time, and everybody must crowd to worship him simultaneously—*i.e.*, in July and August.

To our English ideas this seems inconceivable. During those two months the scorching rays of "Sol Leone" render the sands a burning desert, the sea is as warm as the hot air above it, and the close lodgings too stifling to endure. Of what use is a month at the seaside to us if our children cannot dig in the sands, and our boys and girls take long walks, seaweed and sea anemone hunting?

Italian *dolce-far-niente* requires none of these things; given an awning over his head, a boarded platform under his feet, one, two, or three chairs to sit or lie upon, a *caffé* and billiard-room close at hand, and time to enjoy it all, a Tuscan is supremely happy.

One advantage of the tideless sea is, that one is enabled to have fixed edifices for bathing. At Leg-

horn, where the shore is rocky, the baths are formed of terraces running out into the sea, in the way which Pliny describes them to have been at Baia. These terraces are covered with large awnings, and people sit and work, or read the whole day with the water lapping round their little artificial island. Some of the terraces are lined on both sides with tiny dressing chambers, each with its own awning stretching out like a hood into the sea, so that if preferred the bath can be taken in entire privacy. This advantage be it said, is only appreciated by the elderly, or those *passé* devotees of fashion whose beauty depends on the arts of the toilette. The young and active prefer to disport themseves in the little artificial bays, or even to swim out into the open sea.

At Viareggio, another favourite Tuscan bathing place, where the shore is wide and sandy, the baths are all built on piles. In the winter the shores look like a submerged forest of dead pines ; in the summer there are ball-rooms, *caffès*, terraces, shops, and dressing rooms, all raised airily above the waves of the blue Mediterranean. Being so high above the water, there are no enclosures to each bath as at Leghorn, but every room is supplied with a trap-door and

THE COAST NEAR VIAREGGIO.

wooden steps, and privacy is only to be obtained by remaining in the dark waters amidst the piles. Between the baths and the Marina (a long row of new houses, small and exorbitantly dear during the season) is a Sahara, a sandy waste that has the power of absorbing the heat to a wonderful extent.

Viareggio is a kind of debatable ground between Neptune and Tellus. The sea recedes yearly, and as it draws back, the houses and gardens advance. The ex-Marina becomes Via Ugo Foscolo, and a new Marina thrusts its lines of little balconied, *persiani* decked houses halfway between it and the sea. One year the sands are wide, the next season they are transformed into gardens of aloes, tamarisks, oleanders, and other silicious vegetation. Rising behind the town are the giant forms of the Carrara mountains, which, though steadfast and immutable as to form, clothe themselves in ever changing mists and shadows, giving an endless variety to the monotonous plains of marshy land and pine forests spread at their feet.

Now, having glanced at our surroundings, let us take our work-baskets and sit at the Baths, while we study our neighbours. Here is a little vacant space ; we seek empty chairs to fill it, but as all the

earliest comers take two—one as a chair and the other as a table and footstool—we have a long search amongst the crowd before we are seated. This is the assembly balcony, and reaches quite out into the sea. Linen awnings, bound with scarlet, wave in the breeze around us, and the whole space is filled with family and friendly groups, little knots of chairs drawn together in circles. The ladies are employed in dainty fancy work, or occupied in active use of that excuse for idleness—the fan. Elderly gentlemen read their newspapers or talk politics, while the young ones lean over the balustrade to watch the bathers, or manœuvre to get an introduction to the belle of the season.

The "Bagni da Mare" must be a good time for the modistes, for dress and fashion appear to be the objects of existence here. Quiet ladies who at home are unobtrusively dressed, come out at the seaside in three or even four complete costumes a day. Monsieur Wörth would be alternately filled with envy and paralyzed with horror to be suddenly set down amidst the wondrous toilettes that congregate here. Look at that stout dark woman with an oilskin sailor hat which would suit her youngest boy. She has a talent for originality, for over her dress of blue

linen she has made a tunic of a long fishing-net, with a twine fringe wound in such mysterious coils, and passes around her portly person, that she seems a fish-woman entangled in her own net. Her daughters are also supplied with sailor hats, sailor collars, pea jackets, with large brass buttons; and her boys are miniature "man-of-war's" men. Next to this naval group of women are three or four sisters, neither young nor pretty. They have done their best with limited means to appear at the Baths in due splendour, by donning their old ball dresses of the past carnival.

Near them is an elegant Russian princess, lounging in her Lucca chair, surrounded by a group of satellites. Her toilette is the most exquisite compound of lawn lace and embroidery, fresh, yet soft and filmy; a gipsy hat, with a lace handkerchief tied round it, is the only ornament of her head. *Dos à dos* to this piece of elegant simplicity is a mass of blue flounces, bouillons, pouffs, bows, knots, rosettes, buttons, lace, fringe,—in fact, enough raw material to make three costumes all crowded into one. Of course the hair which belongs to this marvel of complex needle-work is powdered, (gold dust does not suit Italian complexions) and frizzed, and curled, and plaited. This

remarkable person does not affect fancy work; but she plays with her parasol and fan, and smells a bit of geranium, till a young man, of a dandy appearance, with an exaggerated style of dress, begs it of her with many compliments; and another, with tight boots and blue necktie, brings her a rose in its place.

Here is a proud mother with three pretty daughters, all so fresh with their white piqué dresses and black velvet bows, and two or three lively young fellows pretending great interest in the mysteries of tatting and lace working. One even tries to learn *frivolité*, and gets his awkward hands curiously entangled with those of his pretty teacher, as he makes Gordian knots instead of sliding ones.

The season at the Baths is the young girl's delight. She is kept so closely under surveillance in ordinary life, that until her parents find her a "sposo" she lives the life of a recluse. But for these happy weeks she enjoys all the sweets of flirtation and admiration, and very often saves papa the trouble of finding an "*occasione*" for her, by falling in love before marriage like an English girl.

What with the mornings at the Bath, the evenings on the Molo, or on the public promenade, and the

balls in the assembly rooms every night, this charmed fortnight or month glides by only too fast, and when all the pretty toilettes are worn she goes home very reluctantly.

Here comes a *soi-disant* artist. He has devised a costume which will announce the fact to the world at large, and appears in a pleated grey blouse with a loose waistband, a Tyrolese hat worn jauntily and adorned by an eagle's feather, emblematic of his high aspirations, a sketch-book lives habitually under his left arm, and his huge walking-stick has a knack of developing unexpectedly into a camp-stool when he finds a subject worthy of his sarcastic pencil. This "fop of the brush" is a caricaturist, and people say he is making his fortune at the Baths this year. Here is his method. A clever sketch or caricature of some well-known *habitué* is hung up in a conspicuous place and ticketed "25 francs." If the subject be flattered, he or she, or her admirers, gladly purchase ; if, on the contrary, the unfortunate object be rendered ridiculous, she, or her nearest relatives, hasten to buy, as the only means to escape unenviable notoriety.

He is a wise man and sure to make money who trades on the weakness of others.

Another favourite amusement at the Baths are lotteries, or what we call raffles. Here is a man with a large basket of fruit, peaches, figs, pears, and grapes. Going in and out among the crowd with a printed lottery paper of ninety numbers, he soon gets them filled up at 30 centesimi each (3d.). Near us is a group of ladies and some gentlemen, one of whom has just been introduced as Signor Conti.

He declines to take a number, saying he never wins anything, but one of the young ladies proposes that he should put his name and she will choose the number. Of course he complies, politeness forbids him to do otherwise.

An hour passes, when the man reappears with the fruit, saying, "Signor Conti has won; can you tell me where he is?"

"He is gone away, but there is his wife," replies one of the bystanders.

The lady indicated sits in the centre of a large group of friends, with her children around her.

"The Signor, husband of your excellency, has won this," announces the man, setting down the basket on a vacant chair in the midst.

Signora Conti reading her husband's name on the

card unsuspectingly accepts the gift, gives the man a small "buona mano" (fee), and, with effusion, presses all her friends to partake.

The children are all liberally helped, and content shines on their little faces, when up rushes the father, snatches the very grapes from their hands, exclaiming hastily—

"Giulia cara! there is a mistake, this is not ours!"

Here is a catastrophe!

Madame Giulia stays her liberal hand with a look of horror, glances at her friends, of whom one is transfixed with the last mouthful of a pear in her mouth. Another instinctively holds out her hand to restore, but, alas! only a bare peach stone is there. Two more look disconsolately at the naked ramifications which were erst bunches of grapes.

Husband wrings his hands, looks appealingly round.

"But, Enrico!" demands his wife, "if it is not yours, why is your name on it?"

"Because I won it, to be sure."

"Oh, then, it is all right! Why did you alarm us so? Pray continue. Take some more," she adds, offering the unlucky fruit to her friends.

"No, it is not all right. I won it for a lady!"

Now ensues a storm in a teacup. Wife does not even know the lady, and becomes an avenging goddess on her side. Husband escapes the storm by carrying off the fruit on his part. Wife sits down rigid and white among her friends. Signor Conti returns with the basket,—

"Take it!" he exclaims; "Miss S. refuses it."

"Carry it back," ejaculates Madame in majestic scorn. "I refuse to take what your Miss S., whoever she is, leaves."

Unfortunate husband makes two or three frantic journeys, till a sensible mutual friend introduces Miss S. to Madame; explanations ensue, and the whole reinforced party eat the grapes in peace.

So much for the amusements of the elders; the children do not find it a time of unmitigated pleasure, or rather *would* not, were they English children. The sands are there to dig in, but the sun is on them like a fire all day; and, besides, Italian "lusso" (stylishness) does not admit of the toilette being disarranged by play.

The little belles—in all the glory of spotless muslin, lace and embroidery, earrings and necklace, and costly ribbons, low frocks and patent-leather shoes, or white

kid boots, fan in hand, and a ludicrous expression of self-content—are set on a chair with the ribbons and lace well spread out, and here they sit listening to all the nonsense talked by their elders, or, if they are near other children, compare and criticise each other's finery. In the evening they are re-dressed in finer lace and embroidery, often with silk stockings and white gloves, and taken to the Baths, where a children's ball precedes the dance with which their elder brothers and sisters invariably end the evening.

Poor little children! at eight and nine years beginning the frivolities of society, instead of the healthy games of childhood. No wonder they look like little men and women—sallow and melancholy.

The boys are slightly better off than the girls, for they do a little mild fishing over the balustrades of the *bagnette*, but they are under the same dread of soiling their clothes as their sisters, for have not their mothers and aunts spent much time in covering their "tussore" knickerbockers with red and blue braiding, or their velvet suits with braid lace till they look like dressmakers' models?

Now and then a family party pack up their work and move off to the side corridors, on each side of

which are the dressing-rooms. This is always a busy scene. Here are eager girls urgently demanding a room, and waylaying the bath-women as they go by buried under a pile of sheets and bathing costumes. Here are portly ladies standing at the doors of dressing-rooms, vainly calling for the man to come and mop the floor; here are the children restless with anxiety to get a good splash in the shallow water, where they will feel a few degrees cooler and have no frocks to spoil. At last they are suited with rooms; the green doors shut, and, instead of the stylish figures that have disappeared above, certain shivering, barefooted nymphs descend the damp steps from the flooring of one room, and two or three brown-skinned young savages plunge off the steps of the next, and the family are re-united. The Signora and Signore are content to cling to each other, or to the ropes, and dip placidly in the warm water; but the youths and maidens dive and swim, and "fanno la morta" (make a corpse), as they call floating, to their hearts' content. And what swimmers they are, these little dark-eyed girls! With their hair fully dressed, and a rough straw hat on (sometimes the more careful hide their tresses under an oilskin cap with a scarlet ruche

round it), with their gold bracelets gleaming on their arms, with a becoming sailor blouse and drawers, bright with white braid and buttons, they are much more natural in the water than on land. Look at that handsome girl; she swims like a sea nymph. Not at all in the English fashion, which reduces all swimmers to a uniform likeness to a frog, but she just reclines on her side in the water, and, waving her arms like Vivien weaving magic spells, keeps pace with her vigorous brother. This side swimming is a new method, and combines great speed with decided elegance.

There is one gallery devoted to smaller dressing-rooms, without pink cambric and muslin toilettes, and having only one open staircase from the balcony, which runs in front of all the rooms. This gallery is devoted to single gentlemen. At the further end, in a spot visible from the promenade balcony, is a long projecting plank, about five feet above the sea. Here young Italy indulges its acrobatic tendencies. Muscular young figures, in eccentric "tights," run along the plank, form classic silhouettes against the blue sky for a moment as they get up an impetus by swaying, then splash a somersault into the waves. Here goes

an ancient Briton in blue jersey, with the sun and moon on his back! There leaps backwards an old Egyptian, all stripes! A yellow Indian makes a ball of himself, and turns twice as he falls. Then one pretends to be dead, and lets his friends roll him along the plank till they kick him into the water. Now come three at once, and form a pyramid one on the other's shoulders, and all commit mock suicide together.

After this energetic diversion the youths will emerge, wrap themselves in their sheets, and, lighting their cigars, will enjoy themselves in an Arab guise, leaning over their own balustrade.

The favourite masculine amusement is the "skate canoe." Two parallel bars of wood are united by one or two raised seats; on this doubtful bark a party of young men will paddle out half a mile, now tumbling off, now swimming behind, now mounted on the top, till they look like uncivilized beings in the days of the flood. Here comes a boat with a party of bathers, returning, wrapped in their drying sheets, and they look like the mysterious souls in Charon's ferry-boat.

Half an hour later you might see both the ante-

diluvian savages and the ghostly souls decorously dressed in broadcloth and playing a game of billiards.

At about two o'clock the Baths become completely empty, and do not fill again till evening, when the crowd comes back in renewed splendour, to dance, to flirt on moonlit balconies, and eat ices as they listen to the band, or to show off their musical accomplishment by performing on the piano in the assembly rooms.

From eight to nine the children are allowed to dance, which they do with all the *aplomb* of their elder sisters. Now and then crops up a bit of nature that is quite refreshing amid the artificiality. Here is a little maiden who looks like an illustration in a French fashion-book; she has spread out her sash and her embroideries with so much care that they extend to the next chair. Enter a fresh little English girl and takes the vacant seat on the spread fineries. Little Italia, with a "Scusi, Signorina, you might have a little regard for my poor sash!" draws it away and smooths it tenderly.

"If you want to take care of it, you should keep it on your own chair," retorts the matter-of-fact little "Inglese."

Presently a mutual friend, in the shape of a dark-eyed boy in velvet knickerbockers, takes the English child to the dance. Italia frowns and pouts in solitude, yellow ribbons can no more console her, convention fades from her narrow little soul, nature takes possession of it, and she jumps up, rushes into the circle of waltzers, pulls the astonished Inglese from the arms of her partner with a fierce "Now it is my turn; Gianni must dance with me."

Close by, a stylish mamma is trying to induce an overgrown boy to dance with her tiny sprite of a girl. He looks down on her with supreme disdain, saying, "*Che!* what shall I do with her, shall I put her in my pocket?"

Tiny sprite half begins to cry, but shrugging her shoulders turns away with a "Che vuole! he is only a schoolboy though he is so big; here is Luigi, I shall dance with him," while the tall boy, with his hands in his pockets, coolly walks off to find a girl of his own size.

At nine o'clock the little people begin to find themselves danced down by their elders, and by degrees give up the ground. The lamps are brilliantly lighted; the piano, which kind aunts and elder

sisters have been playing, gives place to a string band.

Chaperons and escorts make a goodly array of wall-flowers on the red divans which surround the assembly rooms, and the ball begins in right earnest. Young men who have friends here find partners at once, but those who know nobody have to hunt up some chance acquaintance to introduce them. One of the prettiest girls has taken a fancy to sit among the elders this evening, and has refused half a dozen partners in succession.

"Why, Signorina Veronica, you always dance so much," says a lady acquaintance; "why do you refuse this evening?"

"Because I am affianced," replies Miss Veronica, without the slightest confusion.

"Indeed! I congratulate you. Since when? is it a 'buon occasione?'" (good match) asks the friend eagerly.

"It was settled last night. My *sposo* is Signor Tigretti of Leghorn. He heard of me from a friend of papa's and thought I should suit him, so he came to see me on Tuesday. Papa liked him and the matter was settled at once, as he found my *dôte* sufficient.

We were engaged last night and he went away this morning; but he returns on Sunday, then I will introduce him to you." [1]

All this is said in a matter-of-fact tone—the girl seems quite proud of her new dignity; but our English mind is lost in astonishment at her courage in risking her whole future in the hands of a man she had only seen for one day, and the cheerfulness with which she immediately gives up the girlish pleasures she has so thoroughly enjoyed for the sake of this stranger.

The lady who made the inquiry, espying through the maze of dancers her daughter accepting an ineligible partner, hurries off with "I must go and look after Elvira," and with a patent excuse takes her from the very arms of her partner. Elvira pouts, but must obey; mamma, however, consoles her with proposing to go to the balcony and have an ice. A combination of pine-apple ice, a moonlit sea, and a forthcoming partner in uniform, soon combine their irresistible charms in smoothing Elvira's frowns. Meanwhile it is highly probable that papa in the billiard-room is listening amicably to matrimonial overtures for her

[1] A fact.

from a stout middle-aged man who has made a fortune in castor oil and orris root, and Elvira's dancing days at the Baths are doomed.

So the evening passes, and by eleven the crowds have dispersed to their various abodes, the lights are out, and quiet reigns at the Baths; where the waters lap gently round the piles, and the moonlight makes weird black shadows, till with daylight the airy structure is filled with life again, and the bathing, flirting, envy, delight, scandal, flattery, dancing, and display begin afresh.

But we must not leave Viareggio without a glance at the Capanne or huts. The legitimate Baths only occupy half the length of the sands facing the town. Some original mind wishing to escape the "fashion" of the Baths once built himself a hut with straw hurdles, where he could enjoy the sea, and escape the sun in peace.

Now, half a mile of the shore is lined with these wigwams, and they are quite as much frequented for bathing purposes as the more costly and decorous Bagnetti. Walk down this part of the sands, and you feel as though you have left Belgravia to plunge into savage life. Here maidens, sitting on little wooden

stools under a thatched tent, dry their dishevelled locks. There a group of young savages in simple costume of bathing drawers and jerseys, run in and out of the waves, and roll themselves in the sand in delightful freedom.

A shivering girl emerges like Venus from the waves, and runs barefoot and dripping across the sands to her dressing hut, or her attendant waits her at the water's edge and envelopes her in the sheet like as with a cloud.

Tall manly figures fold their damp limbs in their sheets, and stalk to their huts with the dignity of Arab chiefs in their *burnous*. Children sock and shoeless, paddle in the shallow water, and dig in the sands to their hearts' content, under the shadow of the wigwam. This is half a mile of earthly ground in which Mrs. Grundy dares not meddle; here "what is proper" gives way to "what is comfortable;" but to the fashionables at the Bagnetti, the Capanne are as if they did not exist, so completely do they ignore them.

AN APENNINE VILLAGE.

CHAPTER IV.

The Giostra; or, Open-Air Plays in the Apennines.

THE NOOK, *August* 14*th*.

FOR some days we have been asked by our mountain neighbours, "Are you going to the Giostra at Riobujo?" and we are much puzzled what these jousts can be. The name is suggestive of the Middle Ages, but as Giostre in Italy have never been known since the Medici revival of them in the fifteenth century,—when both Lorenzo and Giuliano de Medici won laurels at a tournament, and their respective poets laureate, Politian and Luca Pulci, sang their praises,—the mystery re-

mains obscure, and we must go to Riobujo to solve it. This village with the grandiose name "dark river," is a cluster of peasants' houses near the top of a pass over the Tuscan Apennines; the dark river resolves itself into a mountain stream running deep in a wooded gorge near. If there are any remnants of the past lingering on in attenuated old age anywhere, we may be sure to find them up in the remote mountain regions; therefore, full of curiosity to see what semblance the Giostre at Riobujo bear to the chivalresque jousts, we start in a *calesse*, on the day of the festa, for a long drive up the pass. The *calesse* is a vehicle on two wheels, with a rope net instead of a foot-board, and a wooden seat slung across on leather straps. The shafts—which are merely the cart frame continued, without hinges—are fastened up high to a kind of Spanish mule-saddle above the horse's back. The capacity of a *calesse* for jolting may be imagined from this—it can never be described.

As we toil slowly up the ascent, winding round clefts and projections in the wooded hills, and skirting fresh valleys, we overtake several walking parties, whole families of peasants in festal dress: young men in groups of six or seven, and young women in gay

kerchiefs and coral necklaces, fluttering their fans as they stroll.

Now and then a group disappears from sight, plunging under the flickering shadows of the chestnut trees to take a short cut, and comes out far before us at a higher turn in the zigzag road. We all meet together at length at Riobujo, where a great crowd is assembled. It begins to dawn on us that the "Giostra" is not a fight, but a drama, for in front of a row of two or three houses a rough platform is erected level with the first-floor windows. This primitive stage (which is very similar to one I have seen represented in an old engraving of an Anglo-Saxon play) is adorned at the two corners with evergreens and flags on the supporting pole, and draped along the whole length of the back with quilts! They must have made a general collection of the counterpanes of the village; there are white ones with fringe, brown home-woven quilts, and ancient green and yellow ones hung on a line as if to dry. More quilts are suspended from the stage to the ground, making a screen to the prompter who stands on a table below the stage, his head and shoulders appearing above it covered with a cowl, made of a clever conjunction of willow sticks with an old yellow

shawl. The gallery of this primitive *al fresco* theatre is naturally formed by stone steps and a sloping ground rising to the level of the road in front of the houses. A clean-swept *aja* or threshing-floor has been roofed with evergreens stretched on poles, and forms the reserved boxes to which we are with great ceremony shown. We make use of our waiting time to gain some information respecting Giostre, and learn that one or the other of the neighbouring villages holds one nearly every year, giving three representations on three following *feste*. The actors are all natives of the place except two from Cutigliano. The old peasant had no idea why they were called Giostre, unless because there was generally some fighting in them.

"Ah!" said a young man, "if you could have seen ours at Piteglio last year! We had the Emperor Constantine fighting for Rome with Maxentius, when he saw the cross in the air. There were the Turks in it, all as natural as life."

What the Turks had to do with Constantine and Maxentius is a matter of conjecture, but it seems necessary for the Italians to connect the *Turks* with any ancient war, their idea of history being evidently

bounded at its remotest era by the Crusades. There might be also a special connection of Turks with the Giostre on account of the Giostra al Saracino spoken of above, and that in its turn would seem a natural outgrowth from the Crusades.

We hear that Semiramide is to be represented, and are morally sure that the Turks will be in Nineveh.

Attention! the orchestra enters. Two youths embracing antique, stringed instruments pass through the audience, disappear beneath the quilts under the platform, reappear between those above, and, taking seats at the back of the stage, wipe their faces previous to performance. One has frizzy hair which compels his hat to stay curiously poised on the back of his head; he has very prominent eyes, and an expression which would be melancholy if it were not vacant. They begin a curious jig movement with a tum-tum accompaniment, by way of overture; the frizzy youth sawing away at his "viol-da-gamba" like a butcher sawing a bone. The violinist tucks a handkerchief under his chin, ostensibly to save a bright red necktie from friction, and, turning up his eyes, plays his instrument with as much energy as is compatible with the simultaneous consolation of a cigar. A sound of

drums and trumpets in the distance! a shout of "*Eccoli!*" a rustle among the crowd; all the women who were nursing their babies comfortably on the steps are disturbed, and fourteen or sixteen performers march through the audience gleaming in coloured satin and tinsel. They disappear behind the screen, and the audience settles down in breathless expectation.

Of course there is a prologue, for is it not the ancient Roman custom? This is carried out quite in the classical way, as Terence says it should be. The prologue expounds the plot, and is spoken by a youth who is not an actor. A kind of herald enters solo; he is dressed in rose-coloured plush, slashed with green, a yellow sash and a turban of feathers, in the American Indian style. In one hand he holds a bouquet, and in the other a lady's embroidered pocket-handkerchief! He gives out the plot of the coming play, telling the audience in couplets, set to a curious pentatonic chant, what they shall see, each line ending with a long croon. It seems a tone come up from the remote past, and quite carries out Carl Engel's theory of the ancient scale being pentatonic, *i.e.*, five notes, leaving out our fourth and seventh, which gives a curious

minor cadence. There are just these five minor notes, and no variation is made on them the whole time. This is the way in which the prologue is spoken. The herald, standing at the left end of the stage, croons out a couplet with an agonized expression of countenance; then the violins play a few strains while he walks the whole length of the stage smelling his flowers; he gives another distressed couplet at the extreme right, again retraces his steps, still smelling his flowers, and repeats the operation so long that it is a relief when the clown comes in and abuses him for disturbing his slumbers.

Now the drama begins in right earnest, for Ninus enters, preceded by his sword-bearer and followed by his soldiers, who according to our prophecy are Turks, for they wear the crescent! We might fancy the half-moons an emblem of Astarte or her Ninevite predecessor, were they not the adornment of turbans, and accompanied by Turkish jackets and trousers. As for Ninus, he has a red velvet cloak richly trimmed with silver tinsel, and a crown of towers (like that of "Italia" on the national paper money) mounted on the top of a pink tarlatan turban.

There is a general darkness and veiny roughness

about the hands of the performers, and a certain villainous expression in their features, which gaudy costumes have a knack of bringing out on honest working faces. The seams worn on a countenance by hard labour, take the appearance of sinister wrinkles when set in an incongruous costume. As there are no drop scenes the action is continuous; one set of actors disappears and the other appears between the curtains the whole time. There is of course a rival king at war with Ninus, and the good arrangement is made that one comes forth always on the right, the other on the left, so that the audience is not confused as to which side they are listening. It certainly is a little surprising that having discovered Turks in the army of Ninus, we should also behold them in that of his rival—but there they are! That glorious army is composed of two Turks and two nondescripts, who have the hats of jockeys, the frilled trousers of *débardeuses* at a Florentine "Veglione," and some wonderful embroidered jackets suitable to the Giaour or the Corsair. A great many scenes are taken up by the missions of ambassadors to the rival courts, each of which appears in its turn till war is declared, and the young general Almiro protests he is

ready for death in the service of Ninus. In ancient history Almiro figures as Onnes.

Place aux Dames! Enter Semiramide with the general. Her costume is curiously modern; she wears a red silk skirt and Roman stays of black velvet, a silver chain large enough to adorn the Lord Mayor, while on her head is a common black straw hat with a bunch of blue and yellow flowers in it, and a black lace fall projecting from its wide brim. Till now the whole drama has been solemnly chanted to the same five weird notes with a croon at the end of each line. The feminine method of declaiming is different; she sings the same chant in a shriller key, with a shake, a quaver, or a turn *ad lib.* on each note!

We wonder whether the ancient Roman plays were sung to a pentatonic chant. It is known that those of the early Italian poets were recited in tone; the Semiramide of Metastasio was intended to be sung in this way. It might be a remnant of the old Saturnian *canto* which Micali ("Popoli Antichi," vol. ii. ch. xxiii.) describes as a species of irregular iambic, without any other laws except a certain sonorous rhythm adapted to singing. The Canto Fescennino, or Fescennian song, was alternate, and still survives in the mountains

in the alternate singing of the Stornelli amongst the contadini. Whatever its origin, it is possible that in this rude chanting recitation we have the prototype of the Italian opera.[1]

It is soon evident that we are not listening either to Metastasio's mild poetical version of Semiramis, or to Rossini's grand but wicked plot; nor yet exactly to the orthodox story given by mythologists, although it approaches nearer to this than any. The *contadini's* Semiramide is a different person altogether. She might be masculine, even cruel, but they maintain her conjugal virtue. She has a husband, and is faithful to him to the last! That husband is the young general Almiro, whose destiny she laments, and begs to be allowed to share, by going with him to the war. This affecting scene is regulated by the same etiquette which marked that of the herald; two couplets are spoken on the left, then the pair follow each other to the right of the stage, there to chant the next verse.

Then ensue several more political intrigues. The

[1] The founder of the opera was a certain Ottavio Rinnuccini, who wrote two musical dramas. The first, "Daphne," was performed in the Palazzo Corsi in 1594; the second, "Euridice," in 1600, at the marriage of Maria de' Medici with Henri IV. of France. Jacopo Peri set both these primitive operas to music.

general gives orders of war to two officers; a spy hears all that passes, and informs his king, who appears to make counter-schemes on the right. The dulness of these war tactics is enlivened by the clown, who comes and volunteers his services with a sieve in his hand, saying, "Io per cento vaglio solo." A comic pantomime of sifting grain gives point to this joke, the word *vaglio* meaning both "sift," and "to be worth."

"Now we shall see the Giostra," says the audience, and truly in the next scene fighting begins. Two armies of five men in each draw up in front of each other, the muffled drums beat, the two generals challenge in chanted couplets, of which we can only hear on one side the words, "dolce invito" (sweet invitation"), and on the other something about "hopes of cutting you in pieces"—which sound rather contradictory. The insulted king advances, still chanting his defiance in the same weird tones; the other replies in perfect rhythm. It reminds one of Homer's heroes, who always speak good poetry when they attack their enemies. Thus singing they advance, cross swords three times, retire, and thrust at the air; this goes on over and over again, the time *crescendo*, till Semiramide,

in a cuirass and helmet, rushes in, like Minerva on Achilles, and, pulling away her husband from the ranks, takes his place, with such effect that the enemy gives way, and the rival king humbly hands over his crown and sword to her; on which her husband, who had stood calmly in the background, comes forward to upbraid her with taking his place—which shows a very manly ingratitude on his part.

In the next scene Almiro brings his captives to the king Ninus, who makes the rival king his tributary, and restores him his crown and sword.

Almiro recounts his own "coraggio ed arte," and his wife's good fortune; on which Ninus makes a very original proposal to take Almiro's wife for queen, and give him his daughter instead. The daughter stands by the throne, a tall girl in yellow and blue satin, and crown of red feathers, and does not seem at all horrified at this proposition.

Great excitement ensues. Almiro cries, "Take my life, but not my wife;" the girl begins, "Padre amato," but is told by Ninus to be silent. Almiro proving obdurate, his arms are taken, and he is banished. Several scenes are occupied by embassies to Semiramide, who refuses all overtures, and goes to seek

her husband. The king flings away his royal mantle and crown, and follows her.

It would take too much were we to follow all the scenes of this prolix drama. Suffice it to say, Almiro dies, or seems to die, and Semiramide weeps over him by applying her handkerchief to the outside of the lace veil. After which she abuses Ninus, telling him "he is more cruel than Nero," a curiously prophetic saying from a Ninevite queen. Next she marries Ninus to gain from him the promise of a day's supreme power, which, as soon as she has adjusted the crown on the top of her hat, she uses by ordering the guards to put Ninus to death. He falls in the midst of a torrent of entreaties, on being pointed at by two long swords. The daughter swoons, and is drawn out of sight behind the curtain, and the king awaits his burial alone.

Till now the drama, though to us comic from its incongruities, has not been at all a burlesque. This scene, however, is decidedly meant to be comic, whether it be from the Italian inherent dislike of solemnity and pain I do not know, but the effort was certainly made to take away the horror of death by making it a farce.

The clown, in a blue cowl, and bearing the Italian flag instead of a black one, comes in, followed by four

men in white cowls. These place Ninus on the bier, where his arms stand out on each side stiff and stark. The requiem is sung in the usual chant, the words only being original: "Tibi, Tibi, tavi! sei morto, perche non hai piu fiato" ("You are dead because you have no breath in you"). The processions consist in turning the bier round and round till they are all giddy, and the audience bursts into a chorus of laughter. It is a curious fact that in ancient Rome the buffoon (mimic) was always a personage in the funeral processions of great persons, so perhaps this is not meant for burlesque after all.

After a few more minor scenes, the daughter appears, fainting in her chair, from beneath the quilts, just as she made her exit. Waking up, she begins to abuse Semiramide; after which she makes a passionless and business-like effort to kill herself with a dagger, but the ambassador, who has been too busy with the affairs of the state all the time to do more than look at her, now rushes forward, pulls the dagger out of her hand, and gives her the pleasant alternative of marrying him instead of espousing death, which she, smiling serenely, with her arms akimbo, accepts forthwith. This scene might have been too touching had not the clown saved

the sensibilities of the audience by exclaiming, "L'avevo fatta mia" ("I wanted her myself"), and, tumbling down, rolls out like a ready-made mummy. The queen ultimately finds her spouse, and, in token of welcome, gives vent to her feelings in countless shakes on her five minor tones. He tells his adventures, and she relates hers; after which she arranges the crown on his head, and places him on the vacant throne, to the detriment of Ninus's royal mantle. The crown is some trouble to him, till he goes behind the scenes to have it adjusted with twine.

The old enemy crops up again: the tributary king refuses to pay tribute, and war is again declared. Almiro goes forth with his crown on the top of his helmet, and Semiramide dons her armour. The challenge is given in pentatonic numbers, the Italian flag waves in the hands of the Ninevites' standard-bearer, and the rhythmic battle is carried on in the same methodical manner as the last, and with the same effect. The tributary king hands his crown to Semiramide, who returns it; all his men give up their swords, and receive them again, on which they all shake hands, and the drama is over. The clown executes a *pas seul*. The herald appears with bouquet and handkerchief,

ROMAN COMEDIANS.

and speaks the epilogue, in the same manner as the prologue, only with this difference, that now he tells them what they have seen, and then he informed them what they would see. He moralizes, shaking his agonized countenance and drawling out his verses, till the clown makes an end of it by proposing a dance, and the whole *dramatis personæ* are soon threading the mazes of the "Trescone," a national Tuscan dance, in which the clown does wonders of agility, and the king's crown has to be dispensed with, the dance consisting in much winding of the arms above the head.

So that is what the chivalresque name of Giostra is given to in these degenerate times in sunny Italy! Yet, through all its crudities and absurdities, there is a strong reminiscent interest. One seems taken back a few hundred years in the world; the wooden stage is not only like the scaffolding at Blackfriars, round which an open-mouthed crowd listened to the "Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet" in the days of Shakspeare, but is like the wooden platform which was used in Rome and Etruria before the great theatres, whose ruins we know so well, were built. On such a platform the plays of the Tuscan tragedian Voltumnio, mentioned by Varro, might have been acted on these very

Tuscan hills. On such a stage the more ancient Atellan plays might have been performed when first introduced by the Oscans. Micali speaks of the Atellan plays as being burlesque farces, where the manners and customs are exposed with that characteristic naturalness which pleases the people. The favourite comic characters were Macco and Bucco (Maccius and Buccius), the prototypes of the modern Pulcinello and Arlecchino.

There is a scenic representation of these characters acting in company with a serious performer on the walls of Pompeii.

It would be interesting to know if these classic comicalities have anything to do with the buffoon who takes the tragedy out of every scene of the Giostra of Semiramide.

CHAPTER V.

The Mushroom Merchants in the Appennines.

THE dampness of the rains coming in the warm season, has produced a most prolific crop of mushrooms. The people of the Nook and of Piteglio are making fortunes, according to the mountain idea of riches. I was told that at Piteglio the joint profits of this year have been several thousand francs. The mushroom season just comes in between the wheat harvest and the chestnut gathering, and if the season be good, it is nearly as profitable as the other crops. Whilst the men are threshing corn on the *ajas*, or digging up the ground with the huge adze which does duty for a plough,

WHERE THE MUSHROOMS GROW.

the women, girls, and boys get up at sunrise, and wander about the chestnut woods in search of *funghi*. If you wonder at the strangeness of their garments, know that it is considered lucky to wear one's clothes inside out on a mushroom excursion.

The contents of their baskets on their return would also astonish you considerably, for the Italian edible mushrooms are many, and brilliantly coloured; they, however, reject our English edible species as a toad-stool, and we were threatened with dire disasters when we persisted in cooking some fine specimens.

The favourite kind here is the *Ceppattello*, a large brown fungus, with a greenish white spongy substance beneath.

The largest specimens are cut up (stalk and all) by housewives, and after being dried in the sun for some days, are put into paper bags and preserved dry for winter use; the little button-shaped ones, called sometimes "porcini," are chosen as the best to preserve under oil, after having been put into boiling vinegar and then dried. They make a very good condiment to eat with the *lesso* (bouilli), or with cold meat.

Another very savoury mushroom is the *Ovolo*, a large handsome fungus, orange red above, prim-

rose yellow beneath. It is called ovolo, or egg-shaped, because it comes up in an oval form covered with a thick white film, through which the yellow part rises and expands, the white film being transformed into a frill round the stalk. Then there are certain carmine red flat-topped *funghi*, with yellow rays beneath, called by the mountaineers *famiglioli*, and the *Claviari*, which look like branches of coralline; the *grifole*, a mass of fan-shaped fungus, of a dark or grey colour; this is so hard that it is not eatable unless it is first boiled and then baked. But the species which most suggests poison to our English minds, are large yellow masses of soft substance, called also *grifole*, or more correctly *poliporo*, some of which are yellow of the most brilliant colour, and others which the peasants call *Lingua di castagno* (chestnut tongues), of a bright carmine. All the last four species grow on chestnut or oak trees, springing from the bark.

The mushroom merchants are doing a brisk business this year. They come round to all the villages and hamlets every morning, and buy up all they can get, piling them on a large cart in flat baskets one on the other, to sell to the wholesale dealers. When

only one merchant arrives he makes his own price, and it is a hard bargain for the villagers, who only get about four or five centesimi (less than a halfpenny) per lb.

This morning an impromptu market is established on the *aja* of Pietro, and a most amusing scene it is. About twenty women from neighbouring hamlets stand about, each guarding her baskets of *funghi*, and oh! good luck! two rival merchants. There is the usual keen-eyed man from San Marcello, and a care-for-nought style of youth who has come down from Prunetta to do a little business. This fellow has black eyes and a mass of ugly black hair, which requires much shaking and thrusting back under his hat. He wears a pink shirt and blue tie, and smokes a meerschaum pipe which does not at all interfere with the freedom of his speech, for he talks incessantly.

There is fierce bidding between them, the young purchaser recklessly promising more than his rival, till he had raised the offers from four centesimi a lb. to six-and-a-half. Here the elder man prudently retired from the contest, saying that he could not get that back for them in Florence.

Accordingly all the women flocked eagerly to the

youth from Prunetta, who began weighing their baskets very willingly on his steel-yard, which these itinerant buyers carry about with them. He would willingly cheat them in the payment, but is kept to his bargain by his rival, who, having no purchases, stands by to see fair play. A brisk trade continues till the elder man shoulders his scale and departs, when lo! what a Babel ensues.

"Now hark ye, *donne*," cries the buyer, "these are not real prices, you know. I only paid high to keep him out of it," pointing to the departing rival, "but the market price is five centesimi, and not one more cent will I pay."

Great excitement ensues. All the women lift up their voices shrilly, and the appellations they bestow on him are not remarkable for politeness; they surround him in a crowd, shaking their fists in his face, till he retreats to the wall, where he takes off his hat, and, pushing back his curls, awaits the lulling of the storm.

"It is not fair; you cannot bargain for one price and pay another; you paid Enrichetta six-and-a-half a lb. and you shall pay me the same," exclaimed a stout angry woman.

"I shall go to Piteglio with mine, and you sha'n't have an ounce of them. I would rather give them to an honest man than sell them to you." And up goes a large basket on the frizzled head of a red-haired girl, but it comes down again on her friends reminding her that she will only get four-and-a-half centesimi there, and have all the trouble of carrying them a mile.

"Then I'll sell them to the other man, he offered five-and-a-half." She rushes off, followed by two or three others calling, "O Giorgio, come back! come back!"

Giorgio, who had not really gone away, strolls back in an unconcerned manner, and coolly inquires, "What is up?"

"That *birbone* won't give more than five centesimi now, so we will let you have them at five-and-a-half."

"Ah!" says he, "but I am not going to give more than five either." Sig. Giorgio was a student of human nature, and seeing that the women were too angry with his rival to deal at any price, he knew he might make his own tariff now.

"Oh! that's too bad, you offered five-and-a-half just now," cried our nice little Matilde.

"Just so, but you would not deal; now he has

changed his mind, and so have I," and the mushroom merchant laughs sardonically.

In despair the women consult together. "Shall we go to Piteglio? perhaps the man from Pistoja is there," asks one.

"No, he isn't; there is only Luigi il Pazzo buying there to-day."

"Besides," adds a third, "he only pays five centesimi, and we should have all the walk besides."

"My basket is heavy, I shall lighten it here," laughs the red-haired girl, showing all her white teeth.

The others follow her example, and the remaining stock is weighed and haggled over to the very last ounce of yellow ovoli, but the merchant is very much at a loss for small change to pay his many clients.

So little accustomed is he to any but the very dirtiest of paper money, that when T—— changed a five-franc note into bright new silver half-francs, he looked quite incredulous, and asked whether they were good!

We were told by one of the women that the people of Piteglio—a village in which there is neither butcher nor baker—have this year gained several thousand francs by their mushrooms, the joint gathering of the

village being nearly 3,000 lbs. a day. It is a blessed provision of Providence that in these regions, where, by reason of the mountainous nature of the land, agriculture is both difficult and unproductive, that the chief means of sustenance are drawn from nature alone, and man only has to gather. The chestnuts supply him with food for the whole winter, the woods and hedges give into his hands mushrooms, bilberries, and raspberries enough to make up the few francs which are necessary for his clothing.

THE PRIEST'S VISIT.

CHAPTER VI.

A Mountain Funeral.

"THE NOOK," *August 7th*, 1885.

POOR old Beppa, handsome Domenico's mother, has been for many months passing slowly into the realms of death. A winter cough and spring weakness have, by the time that the summer heats arrived, changed into utter prostration. When we arrived at The Nook we found her sinking, and all the beef-tea and wine we could supply only restored her for a little time. Even the doctor whom T—— insisted on sending for declared his inability to do anything at this late stage. Sometimes the weak heart caused a species of fainting, and this her family invariably mistook for death. Then her youngest daughter,

Emilia, was despatched post haste to the neighbouring village for the priest, for a good mountaineer does not think a doctor at all indispensable in severe illness, but the idea of dying without the priest would be dreadful to him. So the priest came sometimes before daybreak, sometimes at nightfall, when he generally had to stay all night in the comfortless cottage; but though he duly said prayers for her and laid his stole on the bed as a sign that she died in the arms of the Church, yet time after time Beppa came back to life again. For days the good priest scarcely dared to leave home lest a call to The Nook might come; but after several fruitless alarms he decided not to neglect any more the outlying districts of his parish, and so he departed for Riobujo. Scarcely had he gone than Emilia came flying across the valley to fetch the priest, for "mother was really dying!" The consternation in The Nook was dreadful when she rushed back with the news that the *prete* was away for the day! What was to be done? She could not be allowed to die without prayers and candles! So all the hamlet was roused. Giulio Bettoni—as the greater scholar and nearer to the priesthood, on the strength of having been an acolyte in his boyhood—

brought his mass-book, and, with his Sunday coat on, walked solemnly down the village to Beppa's house. All the women donned their *festa* dresses and hunted out the ends of wax candles they had saved from funeral processions, and assembled round the bed of the old woman. Giulio read the prayers for a passing soul with a high monotonous voice, and the women stood with their lighted tapers all round the bed of the darkened room. The married daughter from Mammiano, who had only arrived this morning, was weeping at the head of the bed, and with trembling hands held a crucifix before her gasping mother. The two younger ones were weeping in the next room. Her husband, the bearded Pietro, had hidden himself out of the house, with the usual Italian instinct of avoiding any disagreeable emotion. The good son, who had been the best and most tender nurse of all, still kept his place on her left, and, now wiping the dews off her forehead, then waving a fan to keep the flies away, gave his whole heart to easing the pains of his mother.

Such was the scene that the "Signora," as the villagers call the English lady, came upon one morning. She knelt down solemnly with the rest;

but when, as usual, she put her hand on the dying woman's pulse, she found that death was not so near after all—the faintness was passing.

"You can wait for the priest, after all," she said; "Beppa has quite a strong pulse."

"But look at her face, Signora; she is dying," said Giulio, half closing his book.

"She has one of her heart attacks, but it is passing;" and the Signora, putting a spoonful of her broth to the lips of the patient, found it swallowed, and repeated it, till she said faintly, "Grazie, Signora, I am better again now."

Domenico pressed the hand of the visitor, and went softly away to get over the revulsion of feeling. Giulio shut his book, the women blew out their candles, and went one by one away, to put on their working garments and go to the fields.

At last there came a day when she recovered no more from the faintness; but the priest was there, and the faithful old soul was led by him to the brink of the dark river.

August 8th, 1886.

Interment follows death very quickly in Italy, and this evening the corpse, which has been surrounded

by lighted tapers and watched by faithful friends all night, is now ready for burial. It lies on the table of the cottage room, dressed in its best print gown and brightest kerchief, and a crucifix clasped in its hands.

Domenico and his sisters are weeping around, and neighbour after neighbour comes in to look seriously on the still, worn old face at rest. Outside on the *aja*, the poor old bent "Atropos" sits on the low wall and shakes her palsied head, murmuring that "it was her turn before Beppa's, and that she ought to have been called first." Then she sighs, "Ah! why does not God want *me* too?"

The children of the villa have spent all their morning in making a cross of flowers, which looks quite important when finished, and the two elder girls find some black veils and white frocks, and depart to join the procession.

We go to the old church of the Pieve, and from the outside pulpit are able to watch the procession the whole way across the valley. The Pieve—which lies half way between The Nook and Piteglio, its mother parish—is a rendezvous for others besides ourselves. From our exalted situation up the pulpit steps we see a little knot of people assembling beneath the spread-

ing chestnut just below us. There are a number of men in their fustian working clothes, and of boys with jackets or without, and every one carries a little white bundle under his arm. One very old man carefully puts his white bundle as a cushion on a large stone, and sinks down tired out. "Oi! Oi!" he exclaims, "my poor old legs won't carry me any more. It will be my turn to be carried to the Campo Santo next."

"Here they come!" cries a boy, pointing to a string of white figures coming down the woodland path from Piteglio, on the other side of the little valley. Then ensues a general stir and flutter, all the white bundles are shaken out, and lo! they turn into ephods, with which every man girds himself, and instead of a knot of shabby-looking peasants, they seem transformed into mediæval saints. A very dirty old man forthwith becomes a venerable pilgrim—the ragged little children are cherubs clad in celestial white. There is a large assembly of women and children, and the mothers are very busy putting white shirts over the tiny breeches of the baby boys in lieu of the girded ephod.

Then comes the priest with the black banner grimly decorated with skull and cross-bones, and a long file of white-robed men following. All the assembly beneath

us falls into rank, and the whole company march, like the white penitents of days gone by, amidst the corn, and are lost in the shadow of the trees round The Nook, where they are gone to fetch Beppa.

After a time, a distant sound of chanting and a glimmer of lights tell us that the procession is coming back. As it draws near, the women in the path and on the green in front of the disused church sink on their knees, with their babes in their arms and little girls clinging to their aprons, and we do the same. In front come 130 white-robed men and boys in couples, in diminishing file, till they end in tiny toddles hand-in-hand. Then the priest and his acolytes chanting; next the two girls from the villa, with a little child between them carrying the floral cross uplifted; then the bier carried by men in white ephods, and accompanied by eight women in black veils carrying candles; then more women with tapers.

Nothing can be more lovely or poetical than this long procession of simple peasants through the winding paths of the cornfield, down the valley where the evening sun tints their white robes rosy red, and next across the bridge into the deep shadows of the dark wood on the other side, and then toiling with

laboured steps up the steep street to the church. It is like an acted allegory of the soul's passage through life and death.

The bells ring "*a doppio*," a stormy pealing all together; the church is reached, and the black cloth cover being removed from the bier, the assembled crowd take their last look at the quiet old face, while the priest reads the prayers and sprinkles her with holy water. Then the tapers are extinguished, and the last journey is made to the Campo Santo, where a coffin awaits. She is tenderly lifted in and nailed down, and deposited in the newly-dug grave.

Two friends of the family, who followed behind the procession with mysterious little baskets on their arms, according to custom, now go about among the crowd giving pennies to each white-robed person, and to the holders of candles. All this is Domenico's generosity, for he will not stint his last expense for his mother. Many of the intimate friends return the money afterwards, but most of them keep it. Domenico and his friends keep vigil in the empty house, the daughters fly to their neighbours for comfort and consolation—and so poor old Beppa has passed out of our lives.

CHAPTER VII.

A Florentine Market.

FLORENCE, 1884.

OLD Florence is fast disappearing. The characteristic narrow streets, where the midday sun only shines down through an irregular sky-line of picturesque eaves and gargoyles nearly meeting overhead, are, one by one, being widened into grand, new streets which take a gay Parisian aspect. Grim old palaces put on new faces, and only their general solidity and name pre-

serves the aroma of antiquity. Now a square, iron-beamed market-place has arisen, which is to substitute that quaint, bewildering, parti-coloured, semi-mediæval conglomeration of human life and curiosities which has for century on century been the mercantile heart of Florence. The old market, and its twin sister the Ghetto, are both doomed to destruction—they are, in fact, to be offered as a sacrifice to the modern deity, "Hygiene." It is right and just that this should be so, but before they disappear from our midst some slight picture of the old Florence, which will never be seen again, should be preserved. The Ghetto and Mercato Vecchio stand side by side, a mass of lurid tenements, with black walls and small windows, piled story upon story in narrow streets almost cavernous in their darkness, and propped house against house by flying buttresses high in air and gloomy archways nearer earth. Among these dismal abodes are larger and more imposing houses, with remains of ancient towers, and sculptured arms and ensigns of extinct guilds on their time-worn façades: these are the old palaces where the potentates of the Middle Ages and the rich burghers of the commonwealth lived in state, for this district which is now given over to squalid

poverty was once the very city of Florence. There is this difference between the last fate of what we have called twin sisters—the Ghetto keeps all her abject mysteries shrouded from the light of day, for no one dares to penetrate her gloomy cellars and the cavernous alleys which hide in these days, not the despised Jews, but all the wretched, hopeless population whose doings, morally and actually, shun the light of day; while the old market close by is still the chief artery of modern life, and is crowded from morn till eve with a never ceasing stream of buyers and sellers. In the Ghetto are squalid old men and women who have never seen the sunlight, and who look on rain as a strange phenomenon, for they have passed a life in the dark cellars, from whence they dare not emerge. All the countless families draw their water from one well in the midst of a dark piazza, and this piazza seems to have represented the outer world to most of them. It has long ceased to be the prison of the Jews, who were confined within its gates in 1571 by Cosimo I.—for in these days the Jews are a great power in the city—but misery, crime, and want lurk there instead.

The old market keeps better company—the archbishop's palace is in its precincts, a church stands at

each corner, and in its narrow streets are the decaying palaces of the Tornaquinci, Vecchietti, Amieri, Neri, Medici, and half the names glorious in Florentine story. A dim memory lingers of a marvellous palace built by the Tosinghi, about A.D. 1100, the tower of which was covered with rows of little Lombard galleries with white marble colonnettes like the tower of Pisa—this has passed away, but less ancient beauties remain. There is the Vecchietti palace, where John of Bologna's black demon grins in endless hideousness, at the corner where the Devil himself galloped by, on a black horse when exorcised by St. Peter Martyr. It was in this house that John of Bologna was sheltered when he came as a foreign artist to study in Florence, and its owner was his most liberal patron. But the Vecchietti palace has older memories than these. There lived the "Cavolaja," or cabbage seller, who in mediæval times had made a fortune by selling the produce of her *podere* in the old market, and at her death ordered the bells of the cathedral and All Saints' Church to be rung for her soul from All Saints' Day to the end of Carnival. Her bones are said to be in the tomb of Bishop Ranieri in the Baptistery, though history does not explain how they got there.

The Amieri palaces form quite a district of the Mercato; their half-demolished towers date from Ghibelline times, and the last Amieri, Bernardo di Nicolo, is known to fame as the father of Genevra, whose story is one of the quaintest legends of Florence. Refused the lover of her choice, and betrothed by force to Francesco Agolanti, she afterwards fell a victim to the plague in 1400. Believed to be dead, she was placed in the family vault in the cemetery by the cathedral. She awoke from her swoon on a bright moonlight night, and, bursting her bandages, escaped from her ghastly prison, and, clad in her shroud, went to her husband's house. He exorcised her as a spirit, and refused to open his door. Her father did the same, and no one would afford shelter to her resuscitated person but the family of her first lover. The marriage with Agolanti was decreed by the tribunals to be annulled by her death and burial, and she was by this curious quip released to begin a happier life with Rondinelli, her first love. To this day the street she trod on that moonlit night is called "Via della Morte."

Another interesting house in the old market is that of the Castiglioni, which has some fine old sculptured

doorways and chimney-pieces. Dante Castiglione was a famous person at the time of the siege of Florence, 1529, not so much for his prowess in war as for a duel he and Martelli fought, against Bandini and his second in rivalry for the smiles of a belle named Marietta de' Ricci. As the combatants belonged to the two opposite parties who were striving for supremacy in Florence, the duel (or double duel—there being four combatants) assumed a political importance, and was taken by the superstitious Florentines as an omen of the fate of the war.

Other interesting buildings are the houses which were once head-quarters of the different guilds. Here is the striped shield of the Linajoli or flax merchants; there, the arms of the Calimala or wool-dressers. Now one sees the lamb and banner of the guild of wool (*Arte aella Lana*), then the (*vaio*) ermine of the Pellicceria or furriers. In one of these latter, Benvenuto Cellini lived. As for works of art, has not the old market one of Luca della Robbia's loveliest conceptions, in the relief of the Madonna and Child of the lunette of the Church of S. Piero Buonconcilio?—the purest faced Madonna and most delicious baby which that master of infantile modelling ever conceived. And

boasted it not once of Donatello's statue of Abundance on its central column? And has not our good old Vasari built a Greek peristyle without a temple to shelter the vendors of unsavoury fish? But now to glance at the aspect of the place as a market.

Could anything be more picturesque than the antique old gabled roofs, and the stalls beneath them with yellow awnings, which seem to absorb the sunlight, and yet shadow the piles of vegetables and baskets of fruit of every hue under the sun. Why, the very cabbages ring the changes on all the reds, yellows, and greens almost to blue-black! then the crimson and orange strings of capsicums festooned across the heaps of scarlet tomatoes, the rich purple of the pear-shaped *petronciani*, and the mingled hues of the pomegranate, make the greengrocer's stall under the yellow shadow a feast of colour as well as a study of life.

Though we see all our old English friends of the vegetable kingdom, yet there are so many unknown herbs that we wonder what they are, and whether they are good for food. Here comes a poor tottering old woman, and putting down a bit of copper as big as a farthing asks for "two centesimi of *radicchio*"—the leaves of the garden chicory. She spends a like

coin in a crust of bread at a baker's, and there is her breakfast complete—bread and salad for less than a penny.

There is a pert serving-maid, looking very pretty under her black lace veil; she spends several minutes bargaining for some lentils, and at length goes off with a parcel of those little brown seeds, of which she will make a *purèe* to garnish the grand joint at her master's dinner table. This esteemed dish is a "*zampone*," a pig's leg, bound and stuffed with meat, like a Bologna sausage, and smothered under a brown mash of lentils.

But what is that keen-eyed man-cook buying? Certain pear-shaped shining vegetables of a rich purple colour. Such things were never eaten in old England. They are called *petronciani*, and are the fruit of the "*Solanum insanum*," or "mad apples." They are first boiled till tender, then cut into slices, dipped in egg, and fried.

A sharp-faced old servant comes up, throws a quick glance round the stall, and muttering, "What, no *gobbi*, to-day? I shall have to go back to Menica after all," and away she hurries. What are *gobbi*, do you suppose? They are a favourite vegetable in

Italy, and are nothing but the stalks of the artichoke, tied up in bundles like celery. They may be eaten boiled, and served with melted butter, or cut into pieces, and fried in eggs and bread crumbs; and are excellent either way, the taste being something between celery and seakale.

Another favourite Italian vegetable consists of the knots of young leaves on the stalks of the fennel; but the flavour is too strong to suit an English taste. There are also some very small kinds of vegetable-marrow, about as large as apples, which are very good.

Here comes another purchaser, who asks for *ceci*, and goes away with a pocket of round, yellow seeds, like over-grown peas, which were taken wet from a barrel of salt water, The plant which produces them is the *Cicer Arietinum* (English—ram's head, or chick pea). A very good "soup *maigre*" is made from them; but if your olfactory organs are delicate, it will be advisable not to assist at the cooking of them, for they emit a strong odour, like salt cod. The Italians live largely on leguminous plants; the numbers of different beans they use is quite remarkable; they vary in colour from the white haricot to dark red,

and even dark brown species. If a working man can get a few beans, either hot or cold, with oil and vinegar, he is quite content to dine without meat; and if a few of the greenish yellow *funghi* are added, he thinks it a meal fit for a king.

But what is this man calling as he comes slowly up the crowded market-street, shouting "*Salati, salati*" (salted). A little boy hearing the cry begins to sing—

"Son salati i miei lupini,
Son salati dalla dama."

"My lupins are salted by my true love;" and he pulls a minute brown coin out of his pocket, and quickly exchanges it for the large flat, yellow lupin seeds, which the man has in a flat, wooden tub. There is scarcely a street corner in Florence at which you will not see the inevitable vendor of lupins, who is largely patronized by the working classes. The lupins are eaten after being kept in brine, but they are not cooked.

In the matter of salad, Italian tastes are as wide as in leguminous vegetables. They eat chicory and sorrel leaves, basil leaves, lettuce, endives, beetroot, dandelion, and cold cabbage. And a favourite salad is a grassy-

looking plant, which they call *barba di cappuccini* (or *Capuchin's* beard), known in England as "buck's horn," "goat's beard," or "star of the earth." The Italians have classical authority for eating this, for Dioscorides said in his time the *plantago coronopus* was eaten cooked; the only difference is, that the moderns do not trouble to cook it.

The fruit stall, which is often distinct from the vegetable seller's, contains quite as many specimens which are strange to English eyes.

Side by side with yellow apricots lies the cactus fruit, or prickly pear. Be sure that you don't attempt to eat it, or even to touch it, without a knife, for the harmless little brown spots which dot its ruddy surface are each composed of a thousand invisible thorns which have a knack of entering the skin on the smallest provocation. The correct manner of eating a prickly pear is to cut off the two ends, then cut down the outer rind, and laying it open, take out the inner pulp. Here are two baskets full of russet brown fruits; one familiar enough is the common medlar, but the other is shaped like a pear. It is the fruit of the *pyrus sorbus* (service tree). When fresh, they look like bright coloured pears; we were shown large

bunches of them hung up in the shop, but they are only good to eat when mellowed by keeping till brown as a ripe medlar, and have a much richer flavour than that fruit. A basket of red, velvety-looking berries, similar to strawberries, only rounder, next attracts us; they are *arbutus* berries, and when quite ripe are really very good to eat.

The children are fond of another wild fruit, called *giuggiole* (jujube tree). They are glossy brown berries, with a soft, green pulp within. The oval red berries of the "cornel cherry" are also greatly appreciated by children. The Romans also knew this cherry, but they grew it chiefly for the wood, from which their lances and arrows were made.

But the most cooling and delicious fruit of all is the Japanese *nespolo*, a yellow medlar, with a delicious acid taste; they come in as soon as the warm weather begins, and are the favourite refresheners until the water-melon takes their place.

There are also different nuts eaten here. Besides walnuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts (which make a dozen different kinds of foods), we have the *pinoli* and the *noce di Brasil*. *Pinoli* are the little kernels of the cone of the stone pine. They are remarkably good in

flavour, having a slight aromatic taste. They are obtained by placing the pine cone in an oven, when the heat causes the scales to open, and the nuts are easily shaken out and cracked with a hammer. The Brasil nut is a curious little pair of twin yellow berries in a brownish husk ; the flavour is rich and aromatic.

A walk through the Italian market will certainly produce the thought that the English might vary and economize their food much more than they do.

A MIGLIACCIO SELLER.

At those old cook-shops, in which the Florentines of three or four centuries ago were wont to dine, and where the ancient plates and dishes they used are preserved on shelves on the walls, one sees the most curious processes of cooking. Over the fire a large wheel revolves, on which are trussed rows of fowls, thrushes, and larks, the latter alternated with bits of bread, pork, and sage leaves. In the frying-pans are savoury messes of yellow *polenta*, made from the maize

flour, frying in oil, and of brown *migliaccio*, a cake of chestnut flour, and piles of nicely cooked *fritto*, the materials for which are endless, ranging the vegetable and animal kingdom.

As for economy, we might learn a great deal from a Florentine cook. For instance, when we truss a fowl, we make no use of the liver, except by displaying it under the wing. As for the cock's comb, and other appendages to the head and neck of chanticleer, we consider them refuse. Not so the Italian; he calls them *regalia*, cuts them up and stews them with the liver in luscious gravy, and makes one of the most stylish *entrées* for a dinner party, either by filling a *vol-au-vent* with them, or in a shape of stewed rice, called *risotto con regalia.*

A fowl will, in the poulterer's hands, serve several customers, for marketing is done on the infinitesimal system. The two bits off the breast are bought separately as a dish for an invalid or a *fricassée* for an *entrée*. Then the carcase is sold for roasting or making soup, the legs and neck are purchased for a few centesimi by the poor, and the combs and livers go to the tables of the rich as *regalia.*

The fish market presents equally curious specimens

of food. The *sepia*, or cuttle fish, is much liked, and you see its long arms, with their curious rows of circular disks, lying about in all directions.

You will never find a mackerel; and if a salmon be visible, it has been imported for the benefit of some English Midas, at ten francs the Tuscan pound of twelve ounces. But there are large-headed, three-sided fish called *naselli*, which are as good as whiting, and a large kind of cod called *palombo*. Lobsters, as we know them, do not appear, but there are huge crawfish, larger than any lobster, and looking like magnified shrimps. It is a fashion to fry the very small shrimps in their shells, and eat them crisp and entire.

Frogs' legs also make a very delicate dish of *fritto*. Indeed, what will not an Italian make delicious in a fry.

A dish of dainty morsels, fried in butter, of a pale brown, is placed before you, and its contents will prove a perfect riddle. Probably there will be melon flowers, bits of every vegetable imaginable, celery, morsels of calves' brain and marrow, tiny lamb chops, sweetbreads, liver, artichoke, bits of fennel, &c., &c. Nothing comes amiss to the frying-pan when a *fritto misto* is required. But our marketing is over; we have got back to the kitchen, so we will leave the cook to her mysteries.

FLORENCE, 1887.

Since this was written, the reluctant Florentines have been driven by force of municipal law to use the iron-bound modern market-place in San Lorenzo; and the six hundred families crowded into that human hive of misery called the Ghetto have been turned out into more healthy abodes, in disused convents or model houses for the poor, where it is hoped that new influences and fresh air will bring new moral and physical health to them. The empty Ghetto has been the exploring ground of artists and physiologists; it has been the scene of carnival gaiety, when the artists with their magic brushes transformed it into the "City of Bagdad," and illuminated its darkest mysteries and gloomiest caverns with electric light. This year it is to undergo another transformation under these artists' hands, and to represent "Cinque-Cento Florence," with Donatello at work in his studio; after which both Ghetto and Mercato are to fall under the reforming touch of improvement. Florence will lose its most characteristic remnants of mediævalism, and gain in a sanitary and moral aspect.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Castle of Belcaro.

June 13th.

WE have been revelling in remnants of the Middle Ages during three days, prowling about that most delightful of mediæval cities, Siena; and to-day we are going outside the walls and down the ridges of the extinct volcano which forms the city, into the undulating land spread wide below. It is a country like a petrified sea, with all its waves carved in tufo, and covered here and there in verdure and foliage.

We are told by the guide-books that Belcaro is only three miles' drive, or one and a half to walk, from the gate of the city; but as we sweep round curve after curve of the changing road, now through flowery corn-

fields, then by the broom-blossomed ravines of ruddy tufo cliffs—here plunging down a steep descent into a valley, there toiling round a cypress-clad hill, Belcaro seems to recede from our gaze, in fact it has not even yet come within view. At last we espy a great fortress on a distant point, and we slowly make our way round the wooded ravine that lies between. We seem to be in every country at once—on our right are English meadows; on the left are French vineyards, with their rows of low-trained vines. A bit of Lombard landscape comes next—rows of tufty poplars in a green plain, then a forest of stone pines that seems transplanted from Ravenna. At length we plunge into a veritable Devonshire lane, narrow, brambly, full of dog roses, ferns, and blackberry bushes; and then emerge on an aerial table-land, and see the three tiers of walls rise in circles round the mediæval castle of Belcaro. They remind one of the walls of Ecbatana in Herodotus, for they are like belts of different colours: the first is clothed in all its height with green ilexes, so cut and trimmed that they seem a very living wall; the next is of yellowish stone, the third of ruddy bricks. Mysterious postern-doors and dark arched entrances come to view among the ilexes as we wind

round the hill to reach the great gates. An inquiring porter or cicerone meets us in the castellated court-yard, and, unlocking a door, leads us up some narrow steps, and lo! we are on the ramparts of the inner walls. A little pathway leads entirely round them. Imbedded in the walls at one corner are some ancient cannon-balls which were fired there in 1554, when Cosimo I. sent the Marquis of Marignano to besiege Siena, and he made this his head-quarters; the balls were fired by the poor Siennese from their ambush in the pine-wood opposite, but they fell harmless, and Siena, defeated at length, succumbed to famine. In the century before this, St. Catherine and her nuns retreated here here from the joys and the sorrows of the world.

In the century after the siege, a rich banker named Crescenzio Turamini arose in Siena, and determined to make the fortress-convent his villa "bello e caro." So he sent for Baldassare Peruzzi, the famous painter and architect, and bade him renovate the villa, build a chapel, and write his name for immortality on the walls, in glowing frescoes. Baldassare set to work, and his labours still show *bello e caro* to our eyes. The entrance-hall has the "Judgment of Paris," a fine fresco, with a Raphaelesque scroll-work around it.

The Loggia is a very Mount Olympus, for all the gods and goddesses congregate among the Pompeian ornamentation of ceiling and arches. These frescoes have been whitewashed over, and again restored, which gives them a newness and spic-and-span appearance in their white and gold stucco setting, which does not add to the classical style.

The same whitewash-and-stucco effect mars the frescoes of the chapel, which the guide assured us were the originals of Peruzzi. They are very light and delicate, full of pale colouring, especially a light green. The subjects are all sacred, but the drawing and handling are essentially light and not religious. The gods and goddesses are still here, clad in saints' garments. There is a charming wreath of cherubim in the centre of the roof, but if it were elsewhere it would be a perfect group of the Loves. There is a St. Joseph, and either an angel or a winged child Jesus at his knees, but if it were not in a chapel a more charming Eros could not be. To see these frescoes after Sodoma's grand religious inspirations, is to read Byron after Milton. A quaint Italian garden filled with oranges and lemons, roses and masses of tall white lilies, is in front of the chapel. The rooms

in the villa are restored, like everything else, and well restored as far as they go ; the furniture, of splendid carved oak on antique models—even the brass keys are of mediæval pattern. The last restorations are by a Siennese gentleman, a solitary Crœsus who lives here alone.

An amusing little episode occurs on our way home. As we pass an old farmhouse, a little "baghera" with a smart donkey is just starting; in it is a pretty laughing girl dressed in blue, with a gipsy hat over her smiling face, and a young brother to drive her. Waving adieu to her mother, they drive off behind us, the boy evidently urging on his donkey by the stimulus of emulation with our horses. Merrily they jog along behind us with ringing bells ; but, objecting to the noise, we beg them to pass. The boy shakes his head doubtfully, opining that his animal will not go fast enough to lead. They pass, but without emulation the donkey's spirits flag; he ceases to trot; at last he wheels round and determinedly takes his way home again. We wave our hands to the piquant face, no longer smiling, and leave them to fight with the donkey for power of will.

VILLAGE IN THE APENNINES.

CHAPTER IX.

Our Drive to Volterra and the Borax Springs.

MARCH.

WE were a merry party of six—Mr. and Mrs. L——, as well as two young friends of ours on their way to the South having joined us, being anxious to see the Etruscan remains of Volterra. We had taken the evening train from Florence, intending to sleep at Poggibonsi, the nearest post-town to Volterra. For two hours we were in exceedingly good spirits, the third our laughter became less frequent, another half-hour and dead silence fell on us all—even Mr. L——'s

jokes lost all their spontaneous lightness and fell dead. He broke a long silence by inquiring whether "the unknown place with the unpronounceable name were at the end of the world."

"If so," said I, "prepare yourself quickly, for we have nearly reached it."

"P*u*dgi-b*u*nsi! P*u*dgi-b*u*nsi!" repeated Emily; "what a queer name!"

"Poggi-bonsi," corrected T——. "In the Middle Ages it was *Podium Bonitii.* The mountain behind us is still called the 'Poggio-Bonzi.'"

At that moment the wheels grated on the lines, and with an exhausted puff our engine stopped at the station of Poggi-bonsi.

Our travellers were well accustomed to the ordinary routine of Continental travel, *i.e.*, to a constant change from hotel to hotel, one a little more luxurious than the other, but this trip into the by-ways was a new sensation, and Mr. L—— got more confirmed than ever in his idea that Pudgy-bunsi, as he persisted in calling it, was at the end of the world. No omnibuses, no cabs, nor even porters at the station! One of the ragged idlers who swarm everywhere in Italy was found willing to carry our bags and show us

the way to the inn of the "Aquila Nera" (Black Eagle).

"This is a very black eagle indeed!" sighed Mrs. L——, gathering her skirts about her as we passed into a dark stone passage.

The "Black Eagle" was evidently not civilized, for the arrival of six "Inglesi" altogether seemed an event of overpowering importance. Landlord, ostler, and all the women of the establishment turned out to look at us. But the portly host soon sent his womankind flying for candles, hot water, and sheets, and had the field of inspection all to himself. Soon three women reappeared, each carrying a tall *lucerna*—the Tuscan substitute for candles—which consists of a tall brass lamp with three small burners, and certain arrangements of snuffers, extinguisher, &c., hung round on chains. We followed these dark-eyed lamp-bearers (who nearly fell upstairs in their anxiety to look behind them at the "*forestieri*") into a large room with a huge open fireplace that seemed a mediæval remnant of Podium Bonitii. Here the women put their *lucerne* on a table large enough to dine the whole Archæological Society, and then resigned themselves without reserve to the sight before them.

They deliberately walked round us, examining us minutely, remarking that "*quella bionda*" (the fair Mrs. L——) was "*tanto bellina.*" The soft sealskin cloaks attracted great admiration, and they came one after another to feel them. By this time the portly landlord had arrived upstairs, and again set the womankind to work. They first lit a fire of blazing faggots in the chimney-corner, which was almost a room of itself, and were quite surprised that we preferred a fire to the use of *scaldini*, the Tuscan substitute for it. As the light fell on the walls we saw they were ornamented with very archaic frescoes of Egyptian landscape: there were small pyramids and gigantic sphinxes, with camels as big as the palm-trees beside them.

After supper we had an interview with the "Master of the Horse," an ex-diligence driver, who, after the usual amount of bargaining, promised us a carriage and pair, as well as a pony-chaise, to take us to Volterra and the Lagoni, and to return in three days.

TUESDAY MORNING.

Oh, miserable awakening! Rain pelting against the window-panes, thick, heavy clouds sitting so close

on the mountain-tops that it seemed the chimneys of the houses scattered on the hill-sides could almost pierce through them. We met in the "Egyptian Hall," as we called the archaic dining-room, with long faces, but made up our minds that a journey in the rain could not be worse than an idle day at Poggi-bonsi, and so decided to start in spite of weather. Our courage in this respect must, I am sure, have greatly confirmed the Italian idea of English eccentricity.

Hark! a trampling of horses' feet and cracking of whips. We rush to the window to survey our carriage and pair and pony-chaise. Alas! the world is full of disappointments, and civilization has not reached Poggi-bonsi. There stands a carriage which must certainly be the first of its species. It is a very high, narrow affair, with a hood of a mountainous aspect. The "carriage" is of wood, painted bright red, very much toned down by the accumulated mud of ages. It has hard blue cloth cushions, suggestive of "moth and rust." The "pair" are stout horses with flowing manes, also flowing fetlocks. They have long necks, long heads, and short tails. The want of tails of their own is made up by the addition of long

foxes' tails, tied with yellow, dangling from their ears. The reins are of red cord, with curious tassels and bunches of fringe here and there. But the pony-chaise! It is a *calessa* of the commonest description—a pair of shafts with a wooden seat slung across them. A twine net serves to rest the feet, and support any bags or parcels placed under the seat. And the pony! A poor little mite whose head hangs down and his rat-tail stands up, and his bones form a subject for an anatomist.

"That pony cannot go eighty miles in three days," cried Mr. L——.

"If the Signor Inglese will have the goodness to try him he will find him perfectly untirable. He would do eighty miles in one day if it is needed."

"Like some of his betters, then, he is not such a fool as he looks," laughed Mr. L——. "I hope none of the Humane Society are within sight, that is all." So saying, the two gentlemen having packed the four ladies as comfortably as possible into the "carriage," proceeded to make martyrs of themselves by braving the weather unprotected in the *calessa*. The general inhabitants of Poggi-bonsi looked from their windows and wondered!

After a drive of half an hour, Mr. L—— called out cheerily, "Fortune favours the brave. I see a bit of blue sky." Down went our dripping umbrellas, and we feasted our eyes and built our hopes on a tiny speck of blue which, alas, soon became clouded again. Our courage had not yet won the favour of the fickle goddess. The rain left off, but only to change to snow as we ascended.

We rumbled through the endless up-hill street of Colle, quite unheeding either the beauties or antiquities of this mediæval city. About a mile beyond it the driver declared it impossible to go on, as it was three hours' ascent to Volterra, and his horses could not possibly do it. On a refusal on our part to go back he proposed, to stop an hour at a little roadside *trattoria;* but the host refused to take us or our horses in. "He had no room for either," he said, surlily, putting a brigandish-looking head out of the window. "Let us try the *fattoria* or farmhouse," said the driver. The farmer and his family were not only humane, but Christian kind. Within ten minutes the shivering, steaming horses were housed in a good shed, and we were all merrily drying our cloaks at the cheerful fire of sticks kindled by the *fattore's* good wife.

The kitchen was the strangest room; the fireplace, which was a chimney corner like an English cottage-hearth, was raised four steps above the rest of the room. It was not used for cooking, for the ordinary Italian range, with its little charcoal holes, was in the kitchen below. The copper cooking utensils shone on the walls, the earthernware ones were ranged on the shelves, while the ceiling was decorated by rows of hams, tongues, pigs' feet, calves' feet, bacon, dried tomatoes, &c., as Mr. L—— graphically said, "like an edible stalactite cavern."

Guests and hosts were a source of mutual amusement. The stout *fattoressa* and her pretty daughters confided to us that they had never seen any English before, and were struck with surprise that we dressed so much like themselves.

"Why," they said, "your hat, signora, is exactly like the new one Assuntina has just had sent her from Florence!" All the time they talked, their respective needles and knitting-pins were flying busily.

"You seem a very industrious family," we said.

"Yes," smiled the portly mother; "my girls are like me, never idle. We are making my second daughter's *corredo* (wedding outfit) now. Assuntina's

is done. Go and fetch some of the things, *figlie mie*, and show your work to the signora." We were amazed at the numbers of beautiful things. Three dozen sets of fine linen underclothing, forty pairs of the finest knitted stockings, knit with clocks, as those of our grandmothers were. Fine knitted quilts, exquisitely embroidered pillow-cases, and even an embroidered sheet.

"And when is the wedding to be?" I asked.

"Oh, we don't talk of that yet," replied the mother. "Assuntina is only eighteen, and you know we must first find the *sposo*." Imagine the chorus of English surprise at seeing a *trousseau* without a prospect of a husband.

"But don't you find the husband first?" inquired Helen.

"That would never do; he would not wait while the *corredo* was being made: besides we have not money enough to put out all at once, and it is more convenient to spin a little this year and a little next and make up the linen as we weave it."

"Besides," said the *fattore*, "a man likes to know what he is going to marry." The "what" instead of "who" was very significant.

"But suppose you do not find a *sposo* after all?"

"*Che! che!* no fear of that. A girl with such a *corredo* and *dôte*, with seven rows of pearls in her necklace, is quite safe. My husband has a young man in his eye; he is son of the *fattore* of the Conte D——, and has already put away five thousand francs in the bank. Our priest will propose her to him soon, and then she can be married when she is nineteen years old. We are getting on now with Carlotta's *corredo*. In another year or two, when that is done, if we live so long, we shall begin Laurina's," concluded the mother, smiling at the little Laurina, a child of nine years old.

"But don't they fall in love first?" asked Helen, who was of a poetical disposition.

The good wife's face was a sight to see.

"No, no! they are brought up too well for that. I never trust them alone—never, never!" she replied, smoothing her apron in self-approbation.

Having thus enlightened our minds as to the Italian manners and customs, the good woman required much information from us, and on hearing that our English youths sought their own wives and fell in love beforehand, and that the *corredo* was not commenced till

the parents' consent was given to the betrothal, they all exclaimed in amazement; but added, "We have always heard the English were a curious people, and then—the way you go round about the world [*girare il mondo*] in all weathers!"

About twelve o'clock it left off snowing and we again started, with many good wishes from our kind entertainers. We soon found that the wind was worse than the snow, as we ascended the precipitous road up, up, up, higher into the icy blasts. The wind would come shrieking round the hill, now on this side, now on that, blowing clouds of snowdrift in our faces. It shook our old chaise till we were in terror of rolling over the precipice. No amount of shawls and rugs could keep it out from our limbs. Behind us the rat-tailed pony put his head nearer than ever to the ground, but jogged on in a dogged persistent manner that raised our hopes of his capabilities. The two gentlemen could scarcely guide him, so benumbed were their hands, for on the whole of one side the snowdrift had frozen upon them. Added to this were the pangs of unappeasable hunger, it being now several hours since breakfast. However, after a long drive we commenced the ascent of the conical hill on

which Volterra sits enthroned in her battlemented walls, like a giant king reposing with his crown upon him. Another hour of winding around the great hill and we were safely within those great strong walls, and enjoying the fire and our luncheon as we had seldom done before.

After lunch we started to see the antiquities, but only got as far as the "Porta dell' Arco," the finest Etruscan gateway extant. The inner arch is of huge blocks of stone put together without cement; the outer arch—overlooking the immense plain surrounding the hill—is of even larger blocks, uncemented, but its charm and mystery is centred in the keystone and two pilasters. These blocks project some two feet beyond the others, and the projecting ends are carved in the form of gigantic heads, which stretch forth dark and mysterious, to look on the scene which has changed under their motionless gaze for three thousand years. They are blackened by time, the very features undistinguishable, but there is a kind of grandeur in their attitude, a noble patience in the outstretched gaze that seems to say, "We have conquered Time, and have not bowed our heads; we now await our conqueror, Eternity." How wistfully we looked up at those speechless yet

eloquent heads! If they could only tell us of the scenes they have beheld! Of the Etruscans who placed them there as guardian deities of their walls; of the fall of that great nation, which as it fell left all its story and all its riches buried in its silent tombs. They could have told of the legions sent out armed against Tarquinius Priscus. They looked on the struggle of the Etruscans with Scipio when the two powers strove till the darkness; and also on the entry of the Roman troops to occupy its fortress under the Triumvirate. They gazed unmoved on the two years' siege of Sylla, who at length forced the closed gateway and passed under as conqueror. The great Cicero had often passed beneath this Sphinx-guarded gateway; he probably regarded these heads with as great a reverence for their antiquity as ourselves.

We were all struck with silence before these dim, dark gazers on the past and the future, impressed as we seldom had been in our lives.

It was too intensely cold to walk round the hill to the walls, so we left them till the morrow and went to see the alabaster works instead.

This precious marble abounds at Volterra; the very roads in the *poderi* are mended with it. Great heaps

of cuttings from the works are thrown out here and there, but the manufactories are not so artistic as we imagined. We saw numbers of workmen engaged in sculpture by rule and compass, and then were shown the finished pieces; but it is evident that art gives way to commerce. We saw rooms full of vases, all of one form, tables full of dogs with baskets in their mouths, of vine-leaved candlesticks, of children emerging from embroidered slippers, but nothing more than mere mechanical repetitions.

"*Ora, ora!*" said the man to whom we expressed disappointment. "Now I will show you *cose d' arte*."

So we went to another room or suite of rooms. It was truly full of beauties, but too full. Even the Venus de' Medici seems to lose her beauty side by side with a whole row of identical Venuses. The dancing Graces are multiplied so often as to outnumber the Muses. Canova's Hebe shows her well-dressed head in all sizes and marked at all prices. Such a multiplication of gems that ought to be unique worried us, and with a purchase or two we took our leave. We shall perhaps like our statuettes better when they shine alone in our English drawing-rooms.

WEDNESDAY, *March* 15.

Our courageous battle against the elements yesterday has won the favour of Fortune, who has given us a cloudless day for our long drive to the Borax Springs. We started at nine o'clock, T—— and myself going, like Darby and Joan, in the "market cart." But, alas! we soon found that driving in a Tuscan *calesse* was not the most pleasant mode of locomotion: it had no springs, and cross-country roads are rough. The descent from Volterra is a winding or rather zig-zag road, from which you get all kinds of varied views of the noble town with its great battlemented walls and castellated towers settled firmly on its mountainous height. The surrounding country is bare and brown, as withered and wrinkled as a rhinoceros-hide. No vegetation, no life of any kind; only hillocks and ridges of brown clay running into and over one another, and leaving weird-looking, stagnant pools in the crevices. One would almost fancy those mysterious heads gazing out from the Porta dell' Arco to be basilisks, whose fixed gaze had withered up the land they overlooked.

At "Le Moje," six miles distant from Volterra, we stopped to see the Saline or Salt Works of San

Leopoldo, where the Government have found it so profitable to "earn their salt," that they have made a monopoly of it, and thereby put an annual £130,000 into their revenues. Nature delights in variety; every country seems to find its salt in a different manner. The English draw it from the sea, the Poles dig it solid from the ground, and the Tuscans have it flowing in liquid springs.

At Le Moje are eight springs, issuing from wells bored to the depth of one hundred feet. Wooden aqueducts bring the water from these wells to the works—a distance of two or three miles: here it flows into several large iron evaporating pans, heated from beneath by huge furnaces, in which we saw large trunks of trees blazing. By long boiling a thick deposit of salt is formed, which is every six hours scraped up to drying-ledges on the sides of the boiler, and from thence carried away to the stores.

The stores were quite picturesque — a miniature Alps formed of irregular piles of snowy, glistening salt. These works produce twenty-two millions of Tuscan pounds of salt annually. It is of a clear, large crystal, very white and pure, though not fine like the table salt used in England.

On leaving here we drove through Pomerance, a large town which looked very imposing from a distance, but in all the length of its streets we could not see any inn decent enough to ask for the luncheon we needed, so we stayed our hunger with a dry brown loaf of the peculiarly sour, leavened bread of the country, and a flask of wine not to be classed with the "luscious Tuscan wines" of which poets have many praises.

We could see the distant clouds of steam ascending from the Borax Springs of "Larderello," and fondly deemed that, as we could behold the limit of our journey, the end was near. Alas, for vain hopes! we drove on and on, round endless mountain ridges, and as we passed one, another came between us and the ever distant clouds of steam.

At length, after skirting fertile valleys and going round projecting mountains for six miles, we crossed the dashing torrent of Possera by a splendidly built bridge of one arch, seventy-two feet wide and ninety above the river, and felt like Dante when he descended into Inferno. Of all places I have seen this is by far the most wonderful.

The whole valley is occupied by Nature's boiling

caldrons. Steam and sulphur fill the air. During half an hour we lived on a minimum amount of air, and that inhaled through cambric pocket-handkerchiefs.

In the absence of the proprietor, Count Larderel, to whom our letter was addressed, the priest kindly went round with us, and after thoroughly frightening, succeeded in just as thoroughly interesting us.

We started on our tour of inspection like so many mutes at a funeral, with our faces tied in our handkerchiefs, each one of us declaring that we could not live ten minutes in such an atmosphere of sulphurous steam ; but at the end of that time we found it much more bearable, and when half an hour was over we forgot the vapours altogether. One of our party having strayed a few steps, the priest calling her back, warned us solemnly to keep close to him, for he said the ground was so treacherous that a false step would plunge us into a boiling watery grave. After that we followed him like a flock of sheep, as may be imagined.

The boracic acid lagoni lie in a valley near Monte Cerboli, and extend over a square mile of the rugged ground. The lagoons are several in number—some are mere ponds, others large reservoirs, but each of them is like a liquid Vesuvius, having an eruption of

boiling water in its midst, which is so fierce as to throw up the jet of water with mud and even stones, and a volume of blinding steam, ten or twelve feet above the level of the lagoon. The springs are sixty feet below the ground: such a force seems quite inconceivable. This sulphurous vapour contains the boracic acid, and is made to pass through the water of the lagoons long enough to impregnate it thoroughly, when it is conveyed in conduits to purifying reservoirs, where it evaporates by natural heat, and then is put into large butts to crystallize. This crystallization is the boracic acid as it is sent to England; £240 worth of it is produced daily. To us the awe of the place was nearly as great as its interest. We walked on plank bridges across the steaming lagoons, enveloped in such dense vapour that we could only see a step before us on the plank.

"Suppose we fell in, what would become of us?" asked Mr. L——.

"You would be skinned like an eel before being cooked," said the priest, in grim jest.

"If any one wants to write a second 'Inferno,' in emulation of Dante," said Mr. L——, "here is inspiration for him. It might be founded on fact."

The good priest, having shown us all the works, next took us into the village, which is in the midst of the vapour. There are several rows of neat cottages, like English labourers' model houses. The streets and terraces are named after the sons of Count Larderel. Then there is the Larderel mansion, very large, and built squarely of red bricks: the priest's and manager's houses, and then a row of buildings in which we soon found the priest's heart was bound up.

When we saw them we envied him his happy pride in his labours. Here were the schools—the infants', the boys', the girls', and the adults' night-school—all in such exquisite order and keeping that they would win a premium from an English school board. Then came a spinning and weaving school for the young unmarried women. The philanthropic Count Larderel supplies the wool and cotton, and the stuffs are sold for the profit of the makers. We watched several pretty-looking girls at their looms making linen, cloth, and *bordato,* a strong plaid linen used by the Tuscan *contadini,* or peasants.

Next was a good large music-hall, in which the village concerts and music classes are held. The Count has given all the music and the instruments,

and provides a good master, who comes out from Florence once a week. The band is well organized, and plays very pleasingly. We heard a solo on the cornet by a boy of fifteen, whose proficiency quite astonished us.

The church has a very pretty interior, with several good works of art in it. Near the church is the library, museum of geological specimens, and the pharmacy, from which all the work-people and their families have medicine gratis.

"This is a very liberal institution," remarked T——. "I should imagine it is much needed, however, in this unhealthy atmosphere."

"On the contrary," laughed the priest, "if the chemist depended on his business he would certainly fail. The atmosphere is unusually healthy; we have very little sickness indeed. Why, look at me—I have lived twenty years here!" And he tapped his broad chest till it echoed again. Certainly he was in excellent health and condition.

"Count Larderel has provided well for his people in mind, body, and soul," we said, as we took leave of our courteous guide, and returned to the inn, where we managed to eat a hearty lunch in spite of the

sulphur vapours. At five we started on our return, and reached Volterra at nine, after a most exquisite drive.

The reflections of a rosy sunset sky and a clear rising moon strove for supremacy in the waters of the Etruscan stream, the Cecina, as we drove over the fine suspension bridge. How clearly the crowned head of the giant hill of Volterra stood out in the full moonbeams; how majestic were the huge battlemented walls and arched gateways in the silver light; how we sang Mendelssohn's open-air music till our voices tired; how we enjoyed our very late dinner, and how sleepy we all were!—Mr. L—— too tired even to make a joke.

THURSDAY, *March* 16.

We gave next morning to Volterra, and a long and well-employed morning we had, in learning the useful lesson not to judge too hastily from first impressions. On entering the cathedral our impressions were, "What a splendid interior, what a wealth of antique marble columns!" Alas! the columns were not even scagliola, but barefaced plaster and stucco, peeling off here and there. The only really good work of art, beyond some pictures in the sacristy, was some beautiful marble sculp-

ture of Mino da Fiesole, which having been turned upside down for a century or so to make paving-stones, was now being restored to the light of day as an altar-piece. Next at the Museum the general exclamation on entering was a shuddering "Oh! oh! what a dismal collection of tombs! Is there nothing to see but old tombs?" and the universal feeling on leaving at the end of an hour or two, was that of intense interest, as if we had been reading a sweet old story. There were several rooms all filled with Etruscan ash chests, each with the effigy of its former tenant reclining on the lid; some of these figures so lifelike that one could almost imagine them the dead of centuries returned to tell their tale. I suppose no nation ever made the silent tomb so eloquent as the Etruscans; their idea of death must have been much more that of a second life, than the utter annihilation, which seems to have been the general idea of the ancients. When life died out they embalmed its story, and laid it up in the sealed tomb, and we can read it after three thousand years. In Volterra the fashion of burning the dead must have prevailed, for the tombs, with one or two exceptions, are mere alabaster or travertine boxes to contain the ashes. The sides of these urns are adorned

with bas-reliefs of classical or mythological subjects, and the lids, with the sculptured effigies on them, form perfect portraits of the deceased. The adjuncts of these were full of meaning, and T—— interested us very much by interpreting all the poetical emblems, till we could make up our own stories of the long-past lives. The pretty young girl with braided hair, and a half-opened flower in her hand, had died young and unmarried. The handsome woman, who held a pomegranate (emblem of fruitfulness) in her marble hand, had with that hand in life caressed and nursed her children, had with those fixed eyes laughed at their joys, and wept at their little sorrows. The lady with the fan and mirror had been perhaps a leader of society, and who knows what lost learning filled the brain of the woman with the Greek profile who held her writing tablets in her hand? The husbands and fathers of these fair ones showed that the banquet was to them the enjoyment of life, for here is the "ruling passion strong in death." Nearly all have a Bacchic chaplet on their flowing locks, and hold either a *patera* or drinking vase in their hands.

The bas-reliefs are as eloquent as the effigies, and

invest death with a depth of poetical meaning that divests it of half its terrors. On one Aurora is rising from the waves, as the soul springs from the dark flood of death, and rises to heaven in the full light of day. On another Pluto is carrying off Proserpine to Hades, a huge Fury lashing the steeds to swiftness — a touching story of a sudden and unprepared for death. The subject of Jason and Cadmus sowing the dragon's teeth, and reaping the fruits in an army of armed men, is often repeated, and to me it seemed only an illustration of many lessons in the Bible; it was indeed "sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind." Another oft-repeated one is Ulysses and the Syrens. The steadfast soul, armed against all temptations, guides his bark steadily towards the haven of safety. But not all are from the Greek mythology; some have purely Etruscan designs, such as the marine deities, who, with human bodies, have double fishes' tails, and two serpents writhing round their heads. These terrible creatures are the grim spouses Glaucus and Scylla. Then come Echidna and Typhon, the two snaky Furies, who are the progenitors of all that is evil. Then the Hippocampus or sea-horse, the Etruscan rendering of Neptune's steeds; also Griffons and

"Chimeras" of impossible forms. The horrible predominates as strongly in Etruscan mythology as the poetical in Greek.

Another more interesting group of tombs are those whose reliefs illustrate Etruscan life, or funereal manners and customs. Here are boar hunts, circus games, either bull fights, gladiator combats, or horse racing, which the Romans are supposed to have adopted from Etruria when Tarquin became king of Rome. Some urns are adorned with sculptures of processions, and other pageantry, there are warriors' triumphs and funeral *cortèges*, also grand pageants of judges going to their judgment-seats, with all the concomitants of lictors and *fasces*, of slaves bearing *curule* chairs, tablets, document cases, &c. One had a touching group of a veiled woman and two children stopping the judges in the way to implore mercy for the criminal husband. In the funereal scenes the mortal and spiritual world are always blended. The soul who is departing for the other world, whether he takes the journey on foot, on horseback, or in a closed litter, is attended by good and evil genii, who often seem struggling for possession of him even as he crosses the dark river. Some prefer to give the last

moments of life rather than the first ones of eternity, and these are peculiarly touching.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

And as we look we feel a strong sympathy for the weeping wife clinging in a last embrace to her dying husband, and a longing to console those tiny children crying terror-stricken round his couch. Their sorrows are over three thousand years ago, but they live still in the lives of us, their younger sisters.

On some tombs sacrifices are being offered, either animal or the more horrid human ones. Here is even an altar with a cross on it—a strange foreshadowing of Christianity.

The Etruscans were highly civilized and very luxurious—the banqueting scenes show this: the tables are furnished so elegantly; the banqueters, male and female, so richly adorned; slaves regale them with music and food at the same time. Some banquets are merely domestic meals, with children playing around and tame birds beneath the table. One tomb shows a school, with a number of little girls reading from scrolls.

Thus do the tombs of Etruria speak more of life

than of death, and thus do the silent dead tell the lost story of a great people. In many of the names we see the forefathers of the great Roman families—the Flavii, the Gracchi, and the Cæcina, whose name is still brought down to us in the river Cecina, which flows by Volterra. There are but few vases in the Museum, and these mostly of the time of the fall of art, for they are coarse and ugly. The real black polished Volterra ware is very beautiful. The bronzes are only a very small and poor collection compared to the beautiful one in Florence; the jewellery also is neither very fine nor abundant, but the glass vases, lachrymatories, pateræ, &c., are exquisite and rare.

Having thus seen all the produce of the tombs, the next thing was obviously to go into one; but, alas! for disappointments! A tiresome walk down a steep, rugged hill; a long search for a custode, who was slow of coming; and then we went underground. Clambering down a roughly-dug hole we entered a circular cave, with a column in the centre, the hole so small that we had to creep into it backward, and so strewn with broken tombs that we could scarcely move a step. Thence another long walk up and round the hills skirting the town on the north brought us to the

Balze, a ravine with wonderfully grand and picturesque precipices several hundred feet deep. There is an element of awe in the place, for the rocks are still crumbling: we heard pieces rolling down and rebounding like cannon-shot. We were told that one church (San Giusto) had been already engulfed in the chasm, and that the church and monastery of San Salvadore stand in danger of falling soon.

We had not time to go into the monastery, as we were anxious to see the accessible portions of the Etruscan walls, of which we had traced several remains in the distant *poderi*, or olive fields, as we skirted the northern hill to the Balze. The portions of wall between the Balze and Porta San Francesco are very fine; they are of large rectangular masses, like the better known ones of Fiesole, and the Cyclopean blocks, overgrown with verdure, are often very picturesque.

Having made the tour of the Etruscan walls, we entered the grand old Etruscan gateway, Porta dell' Arco, with a feeling that the mysterious heads outstretched from its arch frowned at us for finding interest in the fallen grandeur of the city they had seen in its living power and splendour.

After dinner a hasty visit to the alabaster works to buy some vases and statuettes; then back to the hotel, where our primitive equipages awaited us.

"Pudgy-bunsy" had his head lower than usual at the prospect of another long pull. Mr. and Mrs. L——, who had taken a fancy to the little *calesse* (or market cart), drove away. We all mounted the red carriage, awaiting T——, who had dropped behind at the alabaster works. The assembled population of Volterra crowded the Piazza to see the *forestieri* depart, and we found their gaze so embarrassing that we alighted again and went into the hotel. Half an hour passed before the truant joined us with his prize, a pair of beautifully-wrought gold Etruscan earrings, which he had bought of a Volterran antiquary. Besides their value as a work of art, they were peculiarly interesting as a proof that the Etruscans in this city burned their dead, for both earrings were partially melted and destroyed by heat.

Some mile or two from Volterra we descried "Pudgy-bunsy" — as Mr. L—— had sarcastically named the pony! His bones were very visible, his pace that of a snail, and his head seemed trying to whisper to his tired feet.

"How are we to do twenty miles with this wretched beast?" cried Mr. L——. "He won't move a step without the whip, and I can't use that on such a creature."

Our portly driver laughed. "He wants companions, signor, that is all; if you let me lead the way he'll follow." So we passed in front, our horses' bells ringing merrily as we trotted down the long descent. Wonder of wonders! Up went Pudgybunsy's head, his ears pricking in the most lively way; his crawl became a trot, the trot merged into a canter, and the calesse rattled behind us all the way in the cold evening air. The mediæval town of Colle looked lovely with the pure moonlight pencilling out its gates, its turretted walls, and old castles.

We reached Poggibonsi at half-past eight, and found that "mine host" had prepared a supper which he thought worthy even of English appetites—he had even over-estimated them.

CHAPTER X.

A Shrine of Mediæval Art.

OUR friends decide that they have had sufficient experience of country driving in Italy, and so they will take the train to Florence, instead of accompanying us on our pilgrimage to San Gimignano.

"I bid adieu to 'Pudgy-bunsy' with regret," laughed Mr. L——; "but I look forward to a return to civilization as necessary to comfort."

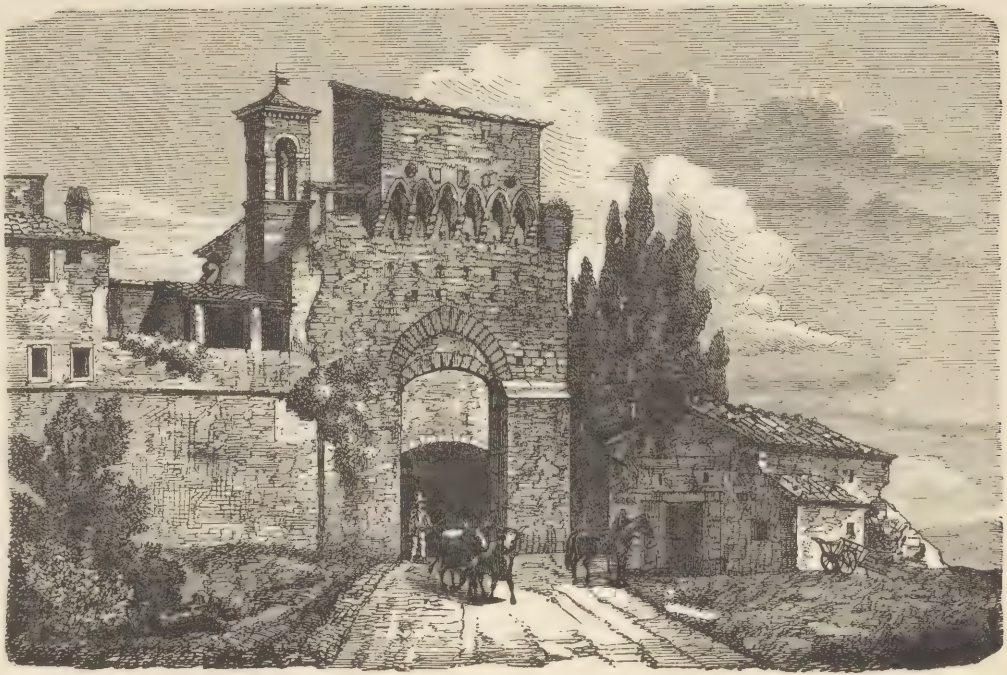
"If there were a decent tramway to San Gimignano now!" adds his wife.

"There is not even a vetturino," said T——; "to

reach it one must plunge entirely into the byways, and not only go out of the known world but out of the nineteenth century, for there you will find yourself in the Middle Ages."

"And have the uncomfortable feeling of being an anachronism. Thank you, I will go back to Florence and her hotels," decides Mr. L——; and as soon as we have seen them depart by rail, we turn our attention to the choice of a vehicle to take us to San Gimignano.

There are plenty of vehicles to choose from, but all seem in an equal state of dinginess, dustiness, and a general shaky condition as regards wheels and springs. Confiding ourselves to one of these *calesse*, we start on a long drive across the pretty country of the Val d' Elsa, where are olives, corn, and vines in abundance, with here and there a little wood struggling up the rugged sides of a chasm in the reddish sandstone. From afar off we see San Gimignano, and so tall and numerous are its towers that it looks as if the child of a giant had been playing with its bricks and stuck all the longest ones on end in a cluster. Of course when we seem within half a mile of the town we have the usual *détour* of three miles, which is



GATE OF SAN GIMIGNANO.

necessary to scale the heights to any old Italian city. We lose sight of it twice, and just at the moment when we think it must be a myth altogether we come suddenly on it—a cluster of gigantic square towers rising up golden bright against a black mass of clouds. Round piles of machicolated masonry, forming the entrance to the town, stand beneath these towers. The whole scene is like a mysterious aerial fortress uplifted against the wild sky, for surrounding us, and seeming miles below, the green valley is spread out, melting by delicate gradations into blue as it reaches the distant mountains, while the setting sun in streams of gold, lights up the frowning old towers and gates, bringing them out in full relief on the black sky behind.

Within the gate, we drive noisily over the multiform paving-stones, through tortuous streets filled with Gothic houses, propped up against each other by arches and flying buttresses high in air. Arriving at the foot of a street steeper than the others, the calesse draws up, and the driver begs us to alight as the vehicle can go no further. The doors of all the Gothic houses are filled with interested spectators of our arrival, many hands are extended to take possession of our bags,

and with a strong escort we climb the hilly street which brings us to a curious double piazza, on the first part of which are an ancient fountain and the palace of the Podestà, and on the second our inn and the Duomo. So quaint and redolent of mediæval times does everything seem, that it is with a start we find that echoes from the world have reached here, and the two piazze are called "Victor Emanuele" and "Cavour."

Seeing our belongings disappear within an archway darker than the others we follow them, and find ourselves in the "Albergo delle due Piazze;" the *salle à manger* of which is furnished with two wooden tables, dark with age, and some solid chairs. A chest of drawers does duty as sideboard, and a long, rough shelf on the wall as a wine depôt. Civility and a hearty welcome, however, atone for lack of luxuries, and hunger and fatigue sweeten the plainest fare.

The bright sun shows us the quaint piazza next morning, and we feel, not like Rip Van Winkle, that we have awaked a century too late, but that we have retrograded two or three hundred years. There are four square towers rising up into the blue air above the old-fashioned houses; two others on our side of

the piazza fling their shadows across its space. On the right is the ancient Palazzo dell' Oriolo, whose clock face has mediæval figures and only one hand, whose lamps, balustrades, and torch-rings are in fine old wrought iron. The entrance to this is a cavernous archway, furnished all round with stone seats, which seems to be a useful resort for itinerant vendors. A primitive fishmonger occupies the front of it to-day; in lieu of marble bench he has a wide tub half filled with water, in which we see a mass of shining fishes in constant motion. I do not know whether the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals extends its protection to fish, but surely they need it sorely when treated as these are. A woman comes to buy, and a bunch of fishes are taken out all ready strung on a reed, but still alive; they wriggle even as she carries them away, to the great delight of an urchin of five years old, who follows his mother, giving the creatures a poke every now and then. A brisk sale ensues; the hostess of our inn goes out to buy some, by which we get a foreknowledge of our dinner.

The opposite side of the piazza is occupied by the Collegiate Church, a large building with a wide flight

of steps reaching all across the square. The façade only reaches to the top of the doorways, all the upper part being unfinished. On going out after breakfast we first turned our steps to this church. What a mass of colour greeted us! This was how the churches looked in ancient times! Not an inch uncoloured. A Bible in fresco spread in pictures on the walls; roof diapered in colour all over, the beams and spans of the arches arabesqued, cornices, lunettes, rood loft—every part glowing with varied tints like a Moorish mosque. Most of the older frescoes have been badly restored, but the general effect at first sight is very impressive. The left wall has a series of subjects from the Old Testament, by Bartolo di Fredi (1356), the father of Taddeo Bartolo of Siena. The drawing is stiff, but the motives full of imagination; the figures are relieved on a black background, but no true judgment can be made of the colouring. they having been badly restored about a hundred and fifty years ago.

On the right wall, Berna of Siena (1380) has done a series of scenes from the New Testament. There is all the serious intensity of his school, with the struggling after the expression of truth which so often

goes with the imperfect execution of his time. The subjects are in two rows of compartments except in the last, the "Crucifixion," which takes the whole height of the wall. It is a great weird picture, flying angels and demons, fill the black background, spectral horses of a gigantic size loom here and there like colossal ghosts; the foreground is occupied by groups of figures full of intense life and expression. These paintings cost the artist his life, for stepping back too far on his scaffolding to see the effect of his work, he fell, and was so much injured that he died two days afterwards. The people of San Gimignano gave him a pompous interment in the church, and paid such respect to his genius that his tomb was constantly covered with Latin elegies, or sonnets and verses in his honour. His pupil, Giovanni d'Ascanio, finished the frescoes.

It was nearly ninety years after this when Benozzo Gozzoli added his martyrdom of St. Sebastian, which is between the entrance doors. The composition is fine, but the chief figure is wanting in life. Art had not yet reached the power of delineating from the nude. These early works of Gozzoli's may, however, be looked on as almost the birth of landscape painting.

There is a great feeling for nature in the forms of the hills and undulations of the landscape, in the little plants springing from the crevices of the rocks, and the flowers beneath the feet of the saint, although the greens are crude and the aerial perspective not good. But the gem of the church is the chapel of Santa Fina, near the right transept, which is decorated by some of Domenico Ghirlandajo's finest frescoes. S. Gimignano is more rich in local saints than most towns; for besides the bishop from whom it took its name, and who is said to have liberated the city from the power of Attila, it boasts two mediæval saints, Sta. Fina and S. Bartolo, both being instances of the peculiar bias of the times to look on suffering as sanctity. Sta. Fina was born in 1238 of noble lineage, but her parents had fallen into extreme poverty. She showed signs of especial purity from her earliest years, and being left an orphan, endowed with great beauty, in a crowded city and lawless times, she was so alarmed by an offer of marriage from a youth, that she prayed God to send her some chastisement which would save her from all such temptations to draw her heart away from Christ in the future. This prayer, of which we should doubt the piety in our

days, was answered. Fina was struck with a painful spinal disease, which she accepted as a sign of God's favour, and, renouncing the luxury of a bed, spent the the remainder of her life stretched on a hard board.

In her chapel, which Ghirlandajo was called from Florence to paint (in company with his pupil Sebastiano Mainardi, who was a native of S. Gimignano), the artist has given two scenes of the saint, in her life and in her death.

The first gives the interior of her cottage with its mediæval furniture of massive oak, the plates of old majolica on the shelf, and a bit of distant landscape seen through the small deep window. Fina lies patiently on her board, while her nurse Beldia sits sorrowful beside her. She has on her head the quaint wimple worn at that time, and of which the tradition is still preserved in the close white veils of the nuns. There are few soft lines in the composition except in the fall of this wimple and the slight undulations of the girlish form of the saint. It bears the impress of the hand of Ghirlandajo, which was more accustomed to the hardness of metal than the soft gradations of colour. There is clear, stern, hard relief, but a good full harmony of colour.

In the "Death of Sta. Fina," on the opposite wall, the master is at his very best. The composition is very similar to the "Death of St. Francis," painted a few years later for the Sassetti chapel in Santa Trinità, Florence—the bier of the saint in the midst surrounded by a semicircle of spectators, the background the rounded apse of a church. In the death of St. Francis the bystanders are monks, mourning their lost companion. In that of Sta. Fina her nurse kneels beside her, imploring a sign of recognition even from the grave, and the dead girl miraculously lifts her hand. Around the bier stands a group of priests, citizens, and little chorister boys, one of whom kneels in adoration to kiss the feet of the sainted maiden.

Ghirlandajo's style of drawing and sculpturesque folds of drapery fit well with the subject, giving it that decorous gravity which entirely suits it. His portraiture is also most valuable: the faces of the men of the time are stamped indelibly on the walls, the grave, quaint setting of the mediæval features, the naive devotional expression of the innocent boys, the lines of thought and care on the wrinkled features of the elder men wrapped each in the stately folds of his *lucco*, are all wonderfully lifelike; the colouring is

full and rich, and the relief marvellous. The roof of the chapel (the Evangelists, Saints, and Prophets) is the work of Sebastiano Mainardi, Ghirlandajo's favourite scholar, who, being a San Gimignanese, had no doubt obtained this commission for his master. He made lasting friendships in the city, for his second wife was a widow named Antonia, of San Gimignano, and Mainardi cemented his ties to his master by marrying Ghirlandajo's young sister.

The marble altar is a beautiful work by Benedetto da Majano. The youthful saint is very miraculous, and her chapel is covered with votive offerings, many of them extremely curious. There are certain long rows of little kneeling figures of a most archaic form repoussè in tin, and some dreadful paintings of illnesses and accidents, some of them dating from 1524, 1526, &c. There is a great wealth of silver still about the chapel, but the sacristan told us that it had been robbed about a year or two ago, and several thousand pounds' worth of silver and jewels taken.

In the choir are a few good old paintings, the most interesting being Benozzo Gozzoli's "Virgin and Child," with saints kneeling in front; a group of angels hold a crown and wreaths of flowers about her

head. In this we seem to see the prototype of many more familiar paintings by the later hands of Fra Bartolommeo, Perugino, and Raphael. Pollajuolo's "Coronation of the Virgin" is an important picture, showing the intense power of expression which struggled against conventional handling in the school of the goldsmith painters. Of Mainardi, few independent works exist beyond the walls of his native city. His masterpiece is between the windows in the choir. It is a Madonna, with S. Gimignano, Fina, and other saints. Ghirlandajo's style is to be traced, but with all its faults, and less than its excellencies. In the sacristy, a very venerable relic was shown us, the finger of S. Gimignano himself. His body reposes at Modena. We also saw the dress of Santa Fina, which, in spite of her poverty, was of good brocade.

The Palazzo Pubblico stands on the side of the piazza at right-angles with the church. It is a mediæval castellated building of the style of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence, but less rich in architecture; its most peculiar feature is that the tallest tower in the city rises over an arch across the street beside it. When the Republic was established, it

was found inconvenient that the civil rulers could not make use of the bells of the Collegiate Church without express permission of the clergy ; so the Commune determined to build a bell-tower for its own use, and having no ground available, flung its foundations across the street on an archway. A tax of three hundred lire was made on the entering office of each *podestà* who wished the privilege of affixing his arms on the façade of the palace, and in 1300 the tower was commenced. Its bell which can be heard six miles away, weighs 12,000 Tuscan pounds.

The Palazzo Pubblico is, like the church, covered with frescoes. Go where you will, frescoes meet your eye. Beneath the arches of the loggia, on the pillars, up the stairs, in the rooms—some appearing dimly beneath coats of whitewash, some peering forth in fragments where stucco has been knocked off; a few badly restored, and fewer still entire. Of the latter the gem is Lippo Memmi's large fresco in the Sala di Consiglio, where it fills almost one entire wall.

The composition is evidently taken from the great fresco of his cousin, Simone, on the wall of the Public Palace at Siena, done two years before—1375, and in which Lippo assisted him. The Virgin and Child are

enthroned in the midst under a canopy; crowds of saints stretch out on each side of her, all more or less conventional. In the midst kneels a little figure of Nello Tolomei, the *podestà* of the time, dressed in a gorgeous *lucco* of red and black stripes.

There is a great striving after expression, and much of the style of Simone Memmi, but the Byzantine traditions are still strong; the conventional attitudes, immobile limbs, gold glories, and straight folds, are the bonds which imprison Memmi's art. Benozzo Gozzoli restored the fresco in 1467, but his restorations seem now little less old than the original.

Historically, this Council Hall is extremely interesting. In it the Commune of San Gimignano received Dante, when he was sent as ambassador to propose to the city that it should join the Florentine League—a proposition the Republic was only too glad to accept, being tired of the internal dissensions between the rival parties of the *Ardinghelli* and *Salucci*, whose hostile towers rise near each other around the piazza. Dante also rendered here the acknowledgments of the Florentines for the assistance of San Gimignano in vanquishing the Ghibellines at Campaldino.

Opening from the Council Hall is a balcony, from

which it was said Dante showed himself and addressed the excited crowd below. We stood some time on this balcony gazing on the quaint piazza, so unchanged in many centuries. Just as we see it now it must have looked when Pope Eugene III. was carried up those wide steps into the church when he came to consecrate it, and give it the rank of Cathedral, in 1148. What a picturesque crowd must have filled the square! the long procession in which the Benedictine monks led the way, and the Augustines followed; then a train of nuns brought forth from their seclusion for this one exciting day; next the new-elected prebends, canons, and priests; then the Pope, under his uplifted canopy, a file of cardinals on each side, gleaming in the sun like scarlet poppies in a cornfield.

The armed procession of knights and burghers who attended Dante when he came in his diplomatic state nearly two hundred years later was of a very different kind from this. A surging crowd filled the piazza while he was received in audience in the Council Hall,—the rival parties of Ardinghelli and Salucci awaiting the decision of the Commune in armed truce, their smouldering enmities ready to break into flame on the smallest provocation.

Again two hundred years had passed when, in 1484, the piazza was the scene of intense excitement, of a nature quite different. On the steps of the church stood a man in the dress of a monk; his earnest eyes blazed like fires beneath the heavy overhanging lids, his nostrils dilated with emotion, his large mobile mouth poured forth inspired words that kindled the souls of all the vast multitude. None had ever seen such emotion, or heard such words before, although they were to stir the soul of Italy to its depths; for it was at San Gimignano that the spirit of prophecy first fell on Savonarola. The people who stood on this balcony, who peered from the windows of the quaint houses, and who filled the piazza with awe-struck faces, were the very first to hear these words: "The Church will be scourged, and then regenerated, and the scourging shall come quickly."

When we had completed our explorations of the ancient Communal Palace, with its fading frescoes, its multitudinous rooms with groined roofs and deep embrasured windows, we wandered about the curious old town, where we discovered several Gothic houses amongst the prison-like mediæval ones. An old square machicolated building, with Lombard windows, had an

inscription over the door that it was erected by Desiderius, the last king of the Longobards: but it appears that the connection of Desiderius with San Gimignano is very doubtful, if not as mythic as the story that Attila was turned away by the prayers of the bishop San Gimignano, who went in procession down the hill to meet the destroyer and beseech him to pass by the city in peace.

Quite at the extreme end of the town is the church of St. Agostino, a dilapidated building, which is nevertheless a precious shrine of art. In no place can the works of Benozzo Gozzoli be studied so well as they can here. His masterpieces cover the walls of the choir, where, in 1465, he depicted the life of St. Augustine in seventeen compartments. Although wanting in some of the qualities which make a genius, Benozzo Gozzoli is an interesting painter and important in his time. He forms the link between the art of Fra Angelico and that of the Ghirlandaji and Pollajuoli.

With the style and handling of Fra Angelico, without his spirituality, he possesses the power of portraiture and realism which is the distinctive mark of Ghirlandajo, without his more harmonious blending of colour and high relief. Of the Middle Ages he is

emphatically mediæval, and his pictures make the city of San Gimignano complete.

He supplies the figures to people the deserted streets. On these walls the very burghers, with their long-sleeved garments and their serious, business-like faces, who owned the towered houses, still live. There are the women, modestly shrouded in their wimples, who went to mass and to market centuries ago; and there are the children—the boys in stiff little blouses, the girls in square-cut bodices—who went to school or played in the paved streets; and there is the naughty boy, whom the irate schoolmaster is flogging with the greatest indignity—the poor child being hoisted on a big boy's back for the purpose.

In linear perspective Benozzo is clever, although his aerial perspective is decidedly defective; but his landscapes are valuable as being almost the first attempts to depict still nature. He evidently loves every little plant that grows. As St. Augustine rides on to Milan his white palfrey treads daintily among the daisies and primroses; a little poodle dog gambols in the ferny grass.

In the scene where St. Augustine teaches the doctors of law, the intensity of expression and natural

portraiture are delightful. There is the sneering lawyer, who evidently thinks the new lecturer very young and is sure he could fill the chair better himself; there is the antagonistic one, who seems taking notes for argument; and there are the earnest ones, who believe and listen dutifully. The sea-piece, where the ship bears the saint to Italy, is a charming bit of nature. The boat is of antique build, with double poop, richly carved. These frescoes were commissioned by one of the bygone celebrities of San Gimignano, a certain Fra Domenico Strambi, who won the name of Dottore Parigino, from having attained celebrity in Paris. Sebastiano Mainardi painted his portrait on the wall of the chancel arch, which has only been re-discovered under a coat of whitewash within the last thirty years. He is dressed in the robes of his order and lies on a monumental slab, with his hands raised in prayer. On the wall of the nave, opposite the principal entrance, is a very immense fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli—a St. Sebastian, which forms a curious pendant to the one in the Duomo. There, he is covered with arrows; here, his martyrdom accomplished, he has the power to ward off the sufferings of others. His cloak is held up by angels, and all the

arrows sent from a group of angels in the celestial regions above are broken in its folds, and so remain harmless to the populace gathered beneath its shelter. It was painted as a votive offering after one of the many deliverances from the plague, which so often devastated San Gimignano—the plague being represented as the arrows of vengeance from heaven. As usual, the most artistic part of the picture is the earthly group A crowd of expressive faces is gathered beneath the wide mantle. Middle-aged men, with stern set features ; young girls, with gentle, modest faces ; and dear little chubby children, round-eyed and innocent.

The church possesses one or two works by Tamagni, a native artist, who was a scholar of Raphael. He must have been the Burne Jones of his time, and had leanings towards a revival of older styles, for, with an advanced style of drawing, he has in his "Birth of the Virgin" mingled an affectation of colouring in the style of the earliest Florentines, and adorned his saints with the gold nimbus and gilded embroidery on their robes, as Bartolo di Fredi delighted to do. His "Christ and Saints" is much more free from these affectations, and has a depth of shadow and rich relief almost equal to Sodoma, but with less religious feeling.

One of the gems of the church is the altar of St. Bartolo, the crippled youth who divides with Santa Fina the veneration of the people of San Gimignano. The altar is beautifully sculptured in marble by Benedetto da Maiano—some say it is by Settignano, however. The shrine is covered with rich decorative designs, and over the altar is a fine alto-relievo.

The Church of S. Jacopo is even older than this. It was founded by the Knights Templars in the eleventh century, and has some very ancient frescoes. Monasticism, almost extinct in the more frequented parts of Italy, still flourishes amongst the other traditional institutions at San Gimignano. A great many friars and priests are to be seen in the streets: there are one hundred and twenty monks, in a population of less than two thousand.[1] The convent of St. Jerome, founded 1100, is still existing, and is a rich possession, the monks having some years ago discovered a copper mine beneath it. Other convents have suffered vicissitudes: that of Santa Chiara is a girls' school now, and that of the Dominicans has become a female penitentiary. The list of S. Gimig-

[1] Probably there are now fewer monks, as several convents have been suppressed since this was written.

nano worthies is a long one. There was Niccolo Pesciolini, sixteenth century, who rose to great diplomatic celebrity at the time of the Medici as ambassador in France; and Curzio da Picchena, ambassador to Spain in the time of Ferdinand and Francis I. of Medici. He was a friend of Galileo, and wrote a translation and commentary on Tacitus. Tamagni, Mainardi, and Poccetti are the artists on whom the city prides herself.

We will suggest to lovers of art who intend to explore San Gimignano that it would be well to supply themselves with tins of edibles in a portable form, for the living is, like everything else, extremely primitive. Returning to the dinner our hostess had promised us, we found it rather a disappointing meal. No butcher's meat was to be had, consequently no soup was forthcoming. The fish we had seen in the tub in the morning figured as the first course, cooked in oil! The women called them "tinche," which we take to mean "tench," but they were of such a peculiarly muddy flavour as to be quite uneatable. They are fish caught in the marshes. Next our hostess talked greatly of a fine piece of mutton which she had obtained for us, but when it came it proved to be a few bones of kid

or goat's flesh, of impossible hardness and inexpressible flavour. The bread was black and hard, and the cheese harder. In the wine we did not recognize the excellence of which the poet Redi sings when speaking of the Val d' Elsa. But the good nature and hospitality of our hosts went far to atone for poor cheer, and the feast of mediæval art at San Gimignano is so great as to banish more mundane realities from our minds.

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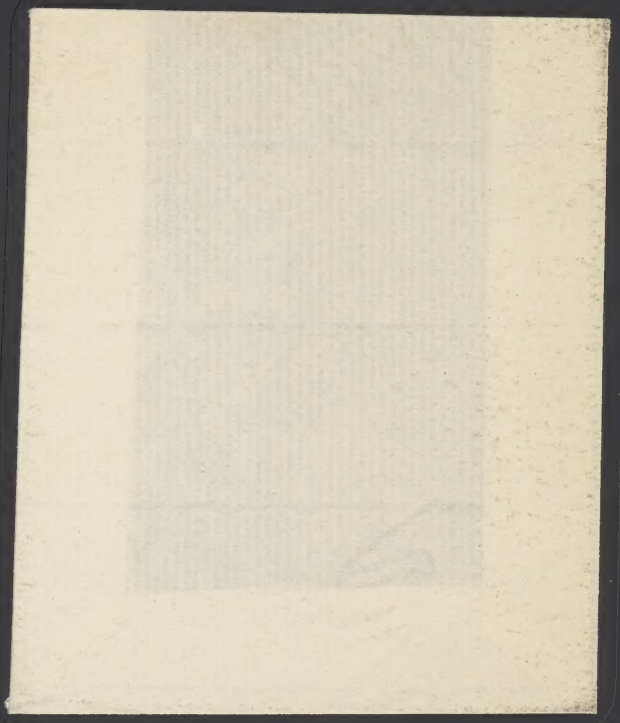
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